

William Simpson

T H E
W O R K S

Of the truly PIOUS and LEARNED

Mr. WILLIAM CRAWFORD

Late Minister of the Gospel at *Wilton*.

C O N T A I N I N G

- I. A Manual against INFIDELITY,
- II. A SERMON preach'd before the
Synod of *Merse* and *Teviotdale*,
- III. ZION'S TRAVELER,
- IV. DYING THOUGHTS,
- V. A PRACTICAL CATECHISM.

Being All that were published in the
AUTHOR'S LIFETIME.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

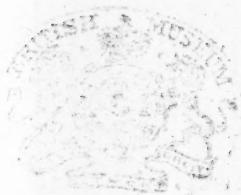
VOL. I.

EDINBURGH,

Printed by R. FLEMING, and sold by him at the se-
cond Shop below the Laigh Coffee-house, 1748.

This VOLUME contains

- I. A Manual against INFIDELITY.
- II. A Sermon preached before the Synod of *Merse* and *Teviotdale*.
- III. ZION'S TRAVELER.



A SHORT
MANUAL
AGAINST THE
Infidelity of this Age.

I N

A DISCOURSE, which, by establishing a few PRINCIPLES, saps the Foundations of Mr. Tindal's Book, entitled, *Christianity as old as the Creation*; and also of the Letter in his Defence.

TOGETHER WITH

A PREFACE containing a Chronological Narrative of the Apostles Grounds of the Christian Religion, in Opposition to Mr. Colin's Grounds.

By Mr. WILLIAM CRAWFURD Minister of the Gospel at *Wiltoun*

As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth, 2 Tim. iii. 8.

Τοιαῦτα ἡμῶν τὰ πολυύμνητα τῆς ἀρετῆς θαύματα. Ταῦτα τῆς ἐν αὐτῷ θεότητος τὰ τεκμήρια. Ταῦτα καὶ αὐτοὶ λογισμῷ σῶφρονι τεθαύμαζαμεν βεβαιωμένη τε καὶ ἐζητασμένη κρίσει κατεζαμεθα. Euseb. Demonst. Evang. Lib. 3. Cap. 4.

Nunc totam rationem brevi circumscriptione signemus. Idcirco mundus factus est, ut nascamur: Ideo nascimur, ut agnoscamus factorem mundi, ac nostri Deum: Ideo agnoscimus, ut colamus: Ideo colimus, ut immortalitatem capiamus: Ideo præmio immortalitatis afficimur, ut summo Patri ac Domino in perpetuum serviamus. *Lactant. Instit. Lib. 7. Sect. 6.*

EDINBURGH,
Printed by R. FLEMING, and sold at the Printing-house in *Pearson's Close*, 1748.

Я Е Д А Е Я

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed amendment to the Constitution of the State of New York, and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities for their consideration.

R E A D E R.

ONE Reason why I publish this, is, I am not pleased to find several good old Principles yielded up to our Adversaries, without any Necessity, in my Opinion, and not without some Disadvantage to the common Cause. What these are, and how they are again revived, may be seen in the Sermon (a).

Besides, I think it may be of Use, especially to some who have not Leisure for long and tedious Controversies, to comprize, in as narrow Bounds as I could, the several Points on which the Controversy between Christians and Infidels mainly turns. I can soon satisfy any, when they please, that I might have been more diffuse in several of the Propositions laid down, having Materials ready; but as this did not answer my Design, so it was not without some Reluctance, that, by the Advice of a learned and judicious Friend, I have extended some of them to a greater Length than what I first
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(a) The Sermon was preached in Jedburgh Kirk, September 20th 1732. at the Admission of the Reverend Mr. James Rowat, late Minister there, where the Propositions were mentioned, and as many discoursed on as Time and Strength would allow.

To the Reader.

intended. I am of Opinion, with the Author of the Critical History of England, that the best Fault a Book can have is to be short.

The Preface pretends to nothing but the setting before the Reader the Grounds of the Christian Religion, as they are laid down by the Apostles ; and the shewing that their Reasoning, in Defence of the same, is just, clear, and perfectly demonstrative.

What Acceptance this little Book shall have in the World, I know not ; but be that as it will, I have the Satisfaction of designing well in essaying something in Defence of the Gospel. Farewel.



PRE-

P R E F A C E;

C O N T A I N I N G

*A CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE of
the APOSTLES Grounds of the
CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
in Answer to Mr. COLIN's Grounds.*

TH O' there are many Causes assigned of the growing Infidelity of this Age, yet I shall here pitch only upon this one, and that is **THOUGHTLESSNESS.** 'Tis not free Thought, nor a serious free Enquiry, that makes Infidels, but a Defect of both.

'Tis owing to this, that we have whole Books from that Set of Men, founded upon this manifest Blunder, That *Matthew's Citations, Chap. i. and ii. of some Passages from Isaiah, Chap. viii. 14. Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his Name Immanuel; from Micah, Chap. v. 2. Out of Bethlehem shall he come forth, that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose Goings have been from of old, even from everlasting; from Hosea, Chap. xi. 1. Out of Egypt have I called my Son; from Jeremiah, Chap. xxxi. 5. A Voice was heard from Ramah, Lamentation and bitter Weeping, Rachel weeping for her Children, &c. and from Jacob, Gen. xlix. 26. Blessings — shall be on the Head of Joseph, and on the Crown of the Head of him that was a Nazarene among his Brethren;* were intended by him as the main, or only Proofs of the Christian Religion.

Had this Gentleman (a) allowed himself in a serious and impartial Search into the Subject he writes of, how could he have thought, that no Arguments were brought to prove Christianity, till *Matthew* wrote his Gospel? Or how could he have miss'd to observe, that the Apostles look'd upon these to be the most direct and main Proofs of Christianity, which they actually made Use of, in converting the World; and in Confidence of which, they bravely, and with great Success, attacked all the established Religions in the World.

In order therefore to convince all who have a mind to examine Truth impartially, how unfair the Enemies of Christianity are, in their Way of impugning the same, before we consider the Intendment of these Citations, we shall here lay before the Reader this short and historical Account of the Proofs, in their Order of Time, made use of by the Apostles, in Defence of the Christian Religion, by which many thousands were persuaded to embrace the same, before *Matthew* wrote his Gospel.

About the
10th Day af-
ter Christ's A-
scension.

The Apostle *Peter*, in a Sermon, *Acts* Chap. ii. by which three thousand were converted at once to Christianity, sets Christianity upon these Grounds. (1.) That it was manifest to them all; they were endued with miraculous Gifts from the Holy Ghost. This is what they could not deny, since it was evident to their Senses, that illiterate Men spoke in that great Assembly, made up of various Nations and Languages, to each in their own Mother-tongue, Ver. 1—12. (2.) That hereby there is a fulfilling of some Promises, made in the Old Testament, particularly in *Joel*, Chap. ii. 28. *It shall come to pass in the last Days, saith the Lord, I will pour out my Spirit upon all Flesh, and your Sons and your Daughters shall proph-*
cy,

(a) *Colin's* Grounds of the Christian Religion.

ey, and your young Men shall see Visions, and your old Men shall dream Dreams, Ver. 16, 17, 18. (3.) That hereby Jesus Christ hath made good what he promised of the Spirit to his Disciples, before his Death, as we have it Luke xxi. 15. *I will give you a Mouth and Wisdom, which all your Adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist; and John xv. 26. The Comforter, whom I shall send to you from my Father, even the Spirit of Truth, he shall testify of me.* And hereby also he proves, that whatever he promised them before hand of the Holy Ghost, it was by a Promise he had of the same from the Father, Acts ii. 33. who could never promise his Spirit to one if he was not sent by himself; that is, he could not lend the supernatural Gifts of the Spirit to confirm a Lie. (4.) That they were Eye Witnesses of many Miracles, Signs and Wonders, wrought by Jesus Christ openly among them. Verse 22. (5.) That only a Divine Power could enable him to work so many and so great Miracles; and hence 'tis made evident, that he was approved of God to be what he declared he was, *th.* If no Man could do such mighty Works, unless God were with him, then 'tis most evident, that Jesus is a Teacher sent of God. (6.) That God had raised him from the dead, Verse 24. (7.) That the Messiah's Resurrection was foretold by David, who says Psalm xvi. 8. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see Corruption,* Ver. 27. (8.) That this they were sensible could not possibly be meant of David, since he died and was buried, and saw Corruption, and his Sepulchre was with them till that Day, Verse 29. (9.) That hence it must be meant of the Messiah promised to be raised, Psalm cxxxiii. 11. *from the Loins of David according to the Flesh,* Verse 30. (10.) That in Conformity to this Prophecy of the Messiah, the Apostles were all Witnesses that God hath raised up Jesus, Verse 32. (11.) That the Jews might see themselves, that Jesus was risen, and highly exalted by the right Hand of God,

by

by the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost on them, as Jesus had promised them from his Father, the manifest Effects whereof they could not deny, being Ear and Eye-witnesses of the same, Verse 33. (6). (12.) That all this was according to the Promise of a new Covenant, to be made in the latter Days, Ver. 39. Hence Jeremias says, Chap. xxxi. 31 — 35. Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah, not according to the Covenant I made with their Fathers, in the Day I took them by the Hand, to bring them out of the Land of Egypt. But this shall be the Covenant I will make with the House of Israel after those Days, I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and they shall all know me from the least unto the greatest of them.

What Effect this Sermon had on the Hearers is to be seen Ver. 41.

Peter and John went up to the Temple, Acts Chap. iii. and Peter in a Sermon sets the Evidences of Christianity in this Light. (1.) That Jesus was a holy and just Person, Ver. 14. Hence such a perfect Pattern of Self-humility, Contempt of Wealth, Charity, Goodness, Meekness and Patience, Virtues, as shined in him, was altogether incompatible with Imposture. (2.) That God had raised him up from the dead, Ver. 15. (3.) That they were Witnesses of his Resurrection, *ibidem*. (4.) That their curing a Man lame from his Mother's Womb, by a Power derived from Jesus, is a manifest Proof of his Resurrection; since the commanding away such a Trouble can be the Effect only of a God-like Power, as well as God-like Goodness, Ver. 16. (5.) That Christ suffered according to the Prophecies that went of

(6) *Athanasius Orat. ad gent.* If Christ be not alive, how doth he yet destroy our Idols, silence your Oracles, cast out Devils, and subdue the World to himself? Are these the Works of a dead Man?

of him, *Ver. 18.* as may be seen *Psal. xxii. 16.* *They pierced my Hands and my Feet.* *Isaiah liii.* *He is despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows.* — Surely he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows; we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted; but he was wounded for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was laid on him. — He was taken from Prison and from Judgment. — He was cut off out of the Land of the Living; for the Transgression of my People was he smitten. — It hath pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to Grief. *Dan. ix. 26.* *After threescore and two Weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.* *Zech. xii. 10.* *They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.* (6) That no Person but Jesus can answer the Character of that Prophet foretold by *Moses, Deut. xviii. 15, 16, 17.* *A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your Brethren, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all Things whatsoever he shall say unto you, Ver. 22.* That is to say, no other Prophet was, as *Eusebius* expounds it, *δευτερις Νομοδότης*, a second Lawgiver; or rather as it is explained *Deut. xxxiv. 10, 11.* *And there arose not a Prophet in Israel like unto Moses, who knew the Lord Face to Face, (as it should be rendered) in all the Signs and Wonders which the Lord sent him to do.* And if that last Chapter of *Deuteronomy* was added by *Joshua* or *Samuel*, according to the Opinion of some, 'tis evident they disclaim any Pretension of being like *Moses*; or if it was added by *Ezra*, as others think, we have his Testimony, who was among the last of the Prophets, that the extraordinary Prophet *Moses* speaks of was not yet come. And hence, because the great Congruity between the Characters of that Prophet, and the Characters of Jesus, there is the highest Reason to think, that Jesus is the Person foretold by *Moses.* (7.) That all the Prophets from *Samuel*, even as many as have written their Prophecies, have

*Prophets
who since
Samuel
have told of
the Messiah.*

have likewise told of the *Messiah*, Ver. 26. As for Instance, (c), *David* speaks of a King set upon the holy Hill of *Zion*, who was to have the *Heathen* for his *Inheritance*, and the *uttermost Parts* of the *Earth* for his *Possession*; which could not be understood either of *David's* self, nor yet of his lineal Successors in the *Land of Canaan*, since the *Assyrian*, or *Babylonian*, or *Persian*, or the *Grecian*, or the *Roman* Empires over-topt him and all his *Posterity*, till the utter Subversion of his *Kingdom*. *Nathan* (d) tells *David* from the Lord, that his *House*, and *Kingdom*, and *Throne* shall be established for ever; which could not be meant of an everlasting Succession to the *Kingdom* in *Israel* in his *Family*, being that temporal *Kingdom* in the *House of David* was long since subverted; and yet the *Promise* here is made in absolute and unalterable *Terms*; since 'tis a *Promise* of such a *Kindness* to *David* and his *Seed*, as no *Sin* in him or them, should disoblige God of his *Oath*: For if any *Thing* can alter God's gracious *Purpose*, it is *Sin*; but here it is expressly provided against, being 'tis said, Verses 14, 15. *If he commit Iniquity, I will chasten him with the Rod of Men, and with the Stripes of the Children of Men*, perhaps even to the dispossessing him of the temporal *Kingdom*, yet this *Mercy* shall not depart from him. This *Prediction* then cannot be otherwise accomplished than in the Succession of the *spiritual* and everlasting *Kingdom* of the *Messiah*, that was to be raised of the *Fruit* of *David's* *Loins*. *Ethan* (e) tells that *David's* *Seed* shall endure for ever, and his *Throne* as the *Days of Heaven*; that his *Throne* shall be as the *Sun*, it shall be established for ever as the *Moon*, and as a faithful *Witness* in *Heaven*. And that it is declared to be an irrevocable *Covenant* is evident, since, if any *Thing* can make a *Covenant* void, 'tis *Sin* and *Iniquity*; but it

(c) *David*, Psa. ii. 6, 8. (d) *Nathan*, 2 Sam. vii. 16.

(e) *Ethan*, Psa. lxxxix. 29, 36, 37.

it is expressly declared, that it shall not, since, as said is (f), *If thy Children break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then I will visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquities with Stripes*, but that he would not break his Covenant, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of his Lips. And again, to shew the Immutability of his Purpose, the Lord confirmed this Covenant with an Oath (g). Once, saith he, *I have sworn by my Holiness, I will not lie unto David*; which again shews this Covenant cannot be meant of an everlasting Succession in a temporal Kingdom, else this Covenant is made void, notwithstanding of the Oath of God interposed. Solomon (h) tells of *Wisdom's building her House*,—*furnishing her Table*,—inviting to eat of her Bread, and drink of her Wine: And as the Apostles, particularly John, and sometimes Paul, used to call Christ $\Delta\gamma\Theta$, which perhaps might be better rendered *Wisdom*(i); and likewise the Jews were accustomed to speak of the $\Delta\gamma\Theta$, as appears from their *Targum*, and Philo, who, 'tis manifest, understood it personally, as *Prov.* ix. personal Actions are ascribed to it. This lets us see what Sense such Phrases were taken in by the Jews, and how rightly applied by the Apostles. Agur (k) speaks expressly of the Son of God; and 'tis evident it was customary among the Jews to call the Messiah the Son of God. Of a Truth, say the Disciples, *thou art the Son of God*, meaning that he was the Messiah, *Matth.* xiv. 33. compared with *Chap.* xvi. 16. Yea it was common Stile to call him so (l). Isaiah (m) speaks of the Messiah in these Words, *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and his Name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace; of the Increase of his*

(f) Psal. lxxxix. Verses 30, 31, 32, 34. (g) Verse 35.
 (h) Solomon, *Prov.* ix. (i) So Tertullian *Apol. Cap.* 21.
 (k) Agur, *Prov.* xxx. 4. (l) *Matth.* viii. 29. and xvi. 63.
Mark v. 7. *John* i. 34, 49. and xi. 27. and xx. 31. (m)
Isaiah, *Chap.* ix. 6, 7. and xi. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10.

his Government and Peace there shall be no End; which Description, as it is not verified in any of the Successors in his Kingdom, so it cannot be applied but to a Person altogether divine. So again *Isaiah* says, *There shall come forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his Roots, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might: He shall be a Heart-searching Judge; under his Government the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord as the Waters cover the Sea; and the Gentiles shall seek to his Ensign.* Can all this be applied to any King of *Israel* or *Judah*? 'Tis evident this has a Respect to a very extraordinary Person that was promised under the Old Testament. *Jeremiah* (n) tells, *Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper.* And that we may know whom he means, he tells, *This is the Name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS:* So also (o), *In those Days, saith the Lord, Judah shall be saved, under the Government of him who is the Branch, and he who shall call her is the Lord our Righteousness.* *Ezekiel* hath told of the *Messiah* (p), *Thus saith the Lord, I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my Servant David; and I will raise up to them a Plant of Renown: The same Shepherd and Branch spoken of by Jeremiah.* But to put all out of Doubt, that a Divine Person is here meant, we are told of this Shepherd, that he is our God. *Daniel* is very express to this Purpose (q), *I saw in the Night Vision, says he, one like the Son of Man come with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him; and there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all*

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(n) *Jer.* Chap. xx. 6, 7. (o) Chap. xxxiii. 15, 16. (p) *Ezek.* Chap. xxxiii. 23, 29, 31. (q) *Dan.* Chap. vii. 13, 14.

Nations, People, and Languages should serve him: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Hosea speaks of the Days of the Messiah in these Words (r), *In the latter Days the Children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and his Goodness.* Joel prophesies of the Times of the Messiah, or of such a large Effusion of the Spirit as never happened but once in the World, and that was when Christianity was first propagated (s). Amos speaks of a Time when all the Heathen Nations shall own and call upon the God of Israel, which never obtained till the Gospel of Jesus Christ was first preached (t). In *Jonah* there is a typical Prophecy (u); since it is not easy to imagine why this Prophet should have a Divine Commission to preach among the Heathens, more than any other, unless it were to point forth the calling of the Gentiles in the Days of the Messiah; or why, when the Lord has innumerable Ways of delivering his People, *Jonah* should be swallowed up by a Whale, and be in the Belly of the Whale three Days and three Nights, unless this had a further Respect to some great Event; and no Event did so remarkably correspond to this symbolical Representation, as Jesus Christ his being *three Days and three Nights in the Heart of the Earth.* Micah is very pointed as to the Place and Character of the Messiah, when he tells (x), that from *Bethlehem* should come a Governour, whose Outgoings have been of old, even from everlasting. This Prophecy was understood by the Jews to be of their Messiah to come, as is evident from *Matth. ii. 4, 5, 6.* Nahum tells of the Messiah's Days in these Words, *Behold upon the Moun-*
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(r) *Hos. Chap. iii. 5.* (s) *Joel Chap. ii. 28, 29.* (t) *Amos Chap. ix. 11, 12.* (u) *Jonah Chap. i. 17.* (x) *Micah Chap. v. 2.*

ains the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings, that publisheth Peace (y). The peculiar Character given to these Times, viz. that *the Wicked shall not pass through thee*, he appropriates it to the spiritual Kingdom of the *Messiah*, whereby he governs his invisible Church by his Word and Spirit. *Habakkuk* also has a prophetic Vision of the *Messiah*, when he says (z) *The Vision is for an appointed Time, but at the End it shall speak, and not lie; tho' it tarry, wait for it, because surely it will come: If any draw back, my Soul can have no Pleasure in him (a); but the just shall live by Faith.* The Vision here is of such Importance, as that the Faith thereof justifies one; i. e. a Man is just or accepted of God, or unaccepted of him, according as he believes or undervalues, and draws away from this Promise. *Zephaniah* evidently points further than to the Restoration of *Israel* to their own Land, when he tells (b), *The King of Israel, even the Lord of Hosts is in the midst of thee, thou shalt not see any more Evil: The Lord thy God will rejoice over thee with Joy, he will rest in his Love.* *Haggai* tells plainly (c), that *the Desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill the House with Glory; and the Glory of this latter House shall be greater than the former*, which cannot be meant of the external Fabrick; for 'tis evident the second Temple in this Respect was nothing in Comparison of the first, as may be seen ver. 3. of this Chapter, compared with *Ezra* iii. 12. The ancient Men that had seen the first House, wept when they saw the Foundation of this latter House laid, because

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(y) *Nahum* Chap. i. 15. (z) *Hab.* Chap. ii. 3.

(a) I follow here the LXX Version, after the Apostle *Heb. x.*, for 'tis certain that (*Yabal*) signifies not only a high but obscure and hidden Place, as *1 Kings* v. 24. and so to hide or withdraw out of Fear. I have observed also, in comparing the LXX Version with the Original, that in several Instances, by a Change of similar Letters, the Word would have the same Signification as in their Version: But yet 'tis as observable, that no Article of Faith is altered by any Difference betwixt them.

(b) *Zeph.* iii. 15, 17. (c) *Hag.* Chap. ii. 7, 9.

so far short of the first: Nor can it be meant of the Divine SCHECHINAH, called *the Glory of God*, which was wanting in the second Temple; particularly *Galatinus* tells (d), "There were these five Things in the first Temple, the Ark, the holy Fire, the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the holy Oil and the Spirit of Prophecy, which the Jews did not pretend were in the second Temple. The only Thing remaining in it was what they called BATH COL." If the Glory of *Zerubbabel's* Temple was to be greater than that of *Solomon's*; and if this greater Glory consisted neither in the outward Fabrick nor inward Utensils, nor in the symbolical Glory of God to be seen in it, then it must necessarily have a Respect to the *Messiah* his coming into that Temple, as *Malachi* afterwards explains it. *Zechariah* prophesies of Christ and his Suffering (e), *In that Day the House of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before him*; Words of a higher Import than what can be attributed to any petty King in *Judah*: And then follows, *They shall look on me whom they have pierced*; so also he says, *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion; shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem, behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an Ass, and upon a Colt the Foal of an Ass.* *Malachi* concludes the Old Testament in very plain Terms about the Lord *Messiah* his coming, and the Time thereof, and all in Conformity to other Prophecies of him (f) *The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his Temple*; that is, come while this Temple stands, even the *Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in*; which the Jews understood of their *Messiah*, is evident by their Expectation of the Prophet *Elijah*, as his Fore-runner, according to what is in this Prophecy (g),

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(d) *Lib. 4. contra Judæos.* (e) *Zech. Chap. xii. 8, 10. Chap. ix. 9.* (f) *Mal. Chap. iii. 1.* (g) *Mal. iv. 5, 6. compared with Matth. xi. 14.*

Behold I will send you *Elijah the Prophet* before the coming of the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

In fine, 'tis evident, that the Prophets spoke all as with one Mouth, about a very extraordinary Person to come, and described him in such Characters, as can agree to no other Person but *Jesus of Nazareth*, and to no other Times but the Times of the Gospel. This Argument was very proper to convince the *Jews* who believed their ancient Prophets; hence the Effect of it was that five thousand are converted (*b*): It is of great Use also to convince the *Gentile* World, since, by the several Events happening to the several Nations about, according to their Predictions, it can be demonstrated they were true Prophets; and if true Prophets in all other Affairs that concern the World, they have Reason to believe their Predictions in this Matter also.

Peter and John are, *Acts* iv. set in the
The same Midst of a great Assembly, where the
Day. High Priest, the Captain of the Temple,
the Priests and Sadduces were gathered,
and they vindicate themselves and their Doctrine upon these Topicks. (1.) That they had wrought an uncontestible Miracle, *Ver. 9.* themselves being Judges, *Ver. 16.* (2.) That Benignity, Goodness and Love appeared in this, as in all their other Miracles, *Ver. 9.* And where is the Fault of doing Good to our Fellow-creatures? (3.) That this Miracle being done in Christ's Name, and for the Confirmation of his Doctrine, is a most certain Proof of his Divine Power and Goodness, *Verse 10.* (4.) That unless he had risen from the dead, he could not endue them with a supernatural Power; and hence his communicating such a Power to them, or his exerting such a Power by them, is a manifest Proof of his Resurrection, *ibid.* (5.) That if *Jesus* be rejected by the Rulers, this is so far from discrediting him and his Doctrine, that it tends

(*b*) *Acts* iv. 4.

tends rather to confirm more our Faith in him, since 'tis plainly foretold, *Pſalm cxviii. 22.* that the Stone which is to become the prime Foundation of the whole Fabrick, will be *ſet at nought by you Builders,* Ver. 11. (6.) That tho' they lay their Account to ſuffer all Manner of Calamities and Miſeries for Chriſt, being warned of this, both by their Lord and by the ancient Prophets, that *Jews and Gentiles,* Kings and Rulers, *ſhould plot againſt the Lord's Meſſiah,* as *Pſal. ii.* yet ſay they, *We cannot but ſpeak of the Things which we have ſeen and heard of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And why could we not? Why might not we live at Eaſe, as well as other Man? Why do we willingly venture on Dangers and Death? Who can be ſuppoſed to chuſe Miſery for Miſery's Sake? What can then be ſuppoſed to prompt us on in ſuch a hazardous Undertaking, but the conſtraining Evidence of theſe weighty Truths we publiſh to the World?

The Evidence of the Apoſtles Teſtimony is excellently cleared by *Eusebius*, from whom I ſhall offer the Reader ſome Paſſages, beſides what are quoted by Doctor *Clark*. After he has obſerved the ſtrict Purity of the Chriſtian Religion, and that Men of wicked Deſigns would never renounce their worldly Enjoyments, as well as their ſenſual Impurities, and that no Man can be ſuppoſed to be ſo exerciſed in Self-denial, Mortification of Sin, and Contempt of this World, as the Apoſtles were, without the Hope of a future Happineſs: He again caſts up the Suppoſition that is contrary to all this, and ſets it in ſuch a fair Light, as every one may ſee, who knows any thing of Mankind, that it was impoſſible the Apoſtles could have undertaken the Cauſe of Chriſtianity, if they had not been perſuaded, that it was equally of infallible Certainty, and of the utmoſt Importance.

‘ Let us ſuppoſe, ſays he, the contrary of what we have been ſaying, viz. That Jeſus Chriſt did not teach his Followers a pure and holy Doc-

Euseb.
Dem. Ev.
L. 3. C. 3.

doctrine, that he did not train them up in strict and severe Virtue; that they were not sensible of any Thing good or valuable in his Person, Life, Doctrine, or Works: How is it possible, when they could have no Prospect of any Pleasure, or Profit, or Honour in embracing his Doctrine, that yet they would forsake their Ease and Family at home, and chuse a thousand Deaths, rather than forbear giving Testimony about Jesus.---A wicked Man, who hath no Pleasure but in this Life, and the Enjoyments that peculiarly belong unto it, (since Death at once extinguishes his Joys and Hopes) can hardly ever be supposed to prefer Death to Life, for the Sake of his nearest and dearest Friend, tho' alive, much less when he is dead, and least of all if he is executed in a disgraceful and ignominious Manner for Imposture and Wickedness---[Were the Apostles virtuous, they would abhor Impiety and Deceit] were they vicious, they would relucate Sufferings. 'Tis not compatible with the Nature of a wicked Man to chuse any Sufferings he can avoid, much less to embrace Sufferings for Sufferings Sake; or utterly give up with Ease, Credit, Life, for no secular Interest that can be so much as imagined or thought of.---If when they saw their Master's fatal Exit, and yet not being deterred by the same, they were resolved still to carry on the Fraud, by palming on the World a great many fabulous Stories of Jesus; yet how was it possible they could be so unanimous in their several Accounts of him?---Can any suppose they conspired together in a League to feign a great many Tales circumstantially narrated about Facts never before Wrought or heard of in these Times, wherein they are said to be done, nor by these People among whom they are said to be wrought? Is this credible? How is it possible to believe this?---If there was such a Conspiracy amongst the Apostles against Mankind, in what Terms can we imagine, that it was conceived? Was it to

this

‘ this Purpose? Brethren and Friends, we know
‘ that he, who the other Day suffered, exempla-
‘ ry Punishment, was a great Master of Deceit and
‘ Imposture; and tho’ we have seen his fatal Issue;
‘ and can propose no Advantage to ourselves, in pro-
‘ fessing to be his Disciples, but the Suffering of Re-
‘ proach and all Manner of Tortures and Deaths, be-
‘ ing that we are vulgar and illiterate Persons; and
‘ tho’ we have neither Power nor Policy to effect our
‘ Design we are upon, a Plot of combating all Man-
‘ kind, and overturning all their established Religions;
‘ however, yet let us stand unanimously to it, that
‘ Jesus wrought many Miracles, and that he rose
‘ from the dead; that he conversed with us forty
‘ Days after his Resurrection; let us persist in this Fic-
‘ tion till Death: For what is the Absurdity in cast-
‘ ing away our Lives for no End? Where is the Un-
‘ reasonableness of attempting a Thing without any
‘ rational Inducement? Why should any be grieved
‘ to undergo Stripes, Bonds, Prisons, Disgrace, and
‘ all Kind of Tortures, for no Good whatsoever; he
‘ can hope for in this World or in the next? Where
‘ is the Hurt of chusing Misery both here and here-
‘ after? — Let us go thro’ all Nations and palm
‘ this Fable upon them: For the Reward of such Est-
‘ rontery ought not to be despised; since ’tis not
‘ Riches, Honour, or any secular Designs, which
‘ are but vulgar and ordinary Things, that we can
‘ have in View; but ’tis the Reverse of all these;
‘ Fire, Sword, Cross, wild Beasts, and all Kind of
‘ Calamities are all we can look for. But what can
‘ be more gainful and pleasant than these? What can
‘ be of more Advantage than to be stated Enemies
‘ both to God and Man, and leave no Hope to our-
‘ selves of any Good to be attained either in this or
‘ in the next World? ’

The said Author has a great deal very strong to
the same Purpose; where, I think, he sets the Mat-
ter in so just a Light, as may convince every one,
that

that no good Man, much less any wicked Man, would, in the Apostles Circumstances, have undertaken the Cause of Christianity, if not constrained thereto by the irresistible Evidence of Facts.

Mich a- Peter and John, Acts v. make another
bout the same Apology for their Doctrine before the
Time. High Priest and Rulers, in which, (1.) They propose their Doctrines, Ver. 12.

That God had raised Jesus from the dead, Ver. 30. That he had exalted him to be a Prince and a saviour; that the End of this is, that he might give Repentance and Remission of Sins, Ver. 31. (2.) They prove these Points by the utmost Evidence that a Fact is capable of; whereas two Witnesses are sufficient in Law to prove a Fact; *We are Witnesses*, say they, and *the Holy Ghost is a Witness*. (1.) We twelve Disciples (yea five hundred at once) are concurrent Witnesses of Christ's Resurrection. And as it was impossible for them to be deceived, after so many repeated Appearances of Christ, and after such long familiar Converse with him; so 'tis impossible they could have any Inducement to deceive others in their Testimony of his Resurrection. (2.) Another Witness which the Apostles refer Mankind unto of the Resurrection of Christ their Lord, and which the Will of Man shall be never able to disprove, is *the Holy Ghost*, Verse 32. *q. d.* God himself attests the Resurrection of his Son, and this in a Way more certain and infallible than even by a Voice from Heaven; since there are the permanent Operations of the Holy Ghost sensibly evident to them all, and which are a standing visible Proof of a Divine Power attesting Christ's Resurrection; that is to say, here are Men, whom they themselves own to be *αγχαμματοι κηιδωται*, Chap. iv. 13. *unlearned and ignorant Men*, speaking with such Variety of Languages as rendered them capable of teaching all Nations, according to the Commission they received from their Master: And besides have the Gift of Prophecy, so that

that none could withstand the Wisdom wherewith they spake; and have also the Gift of discerning Spirits: And all this, besides the Spirit of Holiness granted to every true Believer. And as 'tis evident there must be a Divine Power in these Gifts, they are God's own Testimony of Christ's Resurrection.

The Truth of what the Apostles said is wonderfully confirmed by the Advice given by *Gamaliel*, a noted Rabbi, unto the Sanhedrim of their learned Doctors, and to which they all agreed, for the Reasons offered by him, *Verſes 38, 39, 40. Refrain*, says he, *from these Men; for if this Counsel or Work be of Men, it will come to nought, but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest happily ye be found to fight against God. And to him they agreed.*

By which, as 'tis evident they overthrew their own Story, that *his Disciples came by Night and stole him away while the Watch was asleep*; since not only *Gamaliel*, but also the whole Council of the *Jews* freely own, that, for any thing they can discover, *Jesus* might be raised from the dead, as the Words manifestly import: So 'tis as evident from this Passage, that not one among all the *Jews* was able to detect one Lie in the Apostles Account of *Jesus Christ*; for if they could have convicted them of a Lie, they could have been infallibly certain, that their Commission and Instructions were not of God; since it cannot but appear inconsistent with the Goodness, Veracity, and Wisdom of God, to make Use of Liars and Deceivers to be the Vouchers, yea the only Vouchers and Publishers of so great a Work of God, as the raising a divine Person from the dead, to rescue Mankind from Sin and Death. But further, which is a necessary Consequence upon this, if the *Jews*, even the most learned of them, could not find out so much as one Lie in any thing said by the Apostles to be done by *Jesus Christ*, then 'tis incontestibly evident they could not deny any of the Miracles said to be done by him; that is, they could neither deny that the Facts were done,

done, nor could they find out any Slight or Artifice in the doing them: For if so, they had been sure the Counsel and Work was not of God. And again it follows as necessarily upon this, that if Jesus was indued with a divine Power, he was also instructed with a divine Commission; and, if divinely instructed, his Doctrine was infallibly true. And hence, as his Resurrection was a Demonstration of the Truth of his Doctrine, so his Doctrine being already confirmed, before his Death and Resurrection, by a Series of such Miracles, as the most learned and inquisitive among the *Jews* could find no Objection against; that could in the least satisfy themselves; these, I say, demonstrating his Doctrine to be infallibly true, prove also his Resurrection; since one capital Part of his Doctrine was, That *he should rise from the dead*.

These were Arguments made Use of by the Apostles, for proving Christianity, the same Year our Saviour arose and ascended unto Heaven.

*First Year
After Christ's
Ascension.*

Stephen offers to make a Defence, *Acts viii.* for himself and his Doctrine, but was interrupted by the Violence of Infidels. Only the Design of his Discourse is remarkable, which was to prove, that he was so far from detracting from *Moses*, that on the contrary he preaches up to them, (1.) That very Person whom *Moses* calls *an Angel of the Lord*, appearing to him in the Bush, *Ver. 30, 38.* who (2) is yet evidently the Son of God, whom he exhorts them to believe; since that very Angel is called *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, *Ver. 32.* compared with *Exod. iii. 2, 4, 6.* (3.) *Moses* himself commanded them to hear Christ; hence he requires their Subjection to no other Person than that extraordinary Prophet, recommended unto them by *Moses*, *Ver. 37.* Again (4) he adds, he needs not be surprized at any hard Usage from them, because of his revealing God's Mind to them, this being their old Use and Wont, *Ver. 51, 52.*

Paul is converted *Acts ix. Chap. by - Second Year*
a Voice and Vision from Heaven; a Vi- after *Christ's*
sion of the Lord, *Barnabas* calls it *Ver. Ascension.*

27. And as *Paul* makes use of this afterwards, as a Proof of Christianity, so 'tis evidently a Demonstration thereof: For if the Disciples had never seen the Lord after his Resurrection, they were infallibly certain that *Paul's* Vision was a mere Fiction; and being sure that now he was a Cheat, who Yesterday was their avowed Enemy, how is it possible they could have any other Thoughts of the Matter, but that he had contrived such a Story to catch his Opportunity of apprehending them? The Wit of Men will not be able to contrive how *Paul*, in such Circumstances, could have wrought himself into the Apostles Confidence, upon such a Supposition as this. We find that when the Fact is supposed to be true, there was such a Distrust of *Paul*, and not without Ground, that *Ananias* needed a Vision from the Lord to receive him; nor could the first divine Intimation altogether remove his Jealousy, till more confirmed, *Ver. 15.* But if the Apostles be supposed to know all was Trick, as they must be, if they were not satisfied *Christ* was risen, they could not imagine that *Paul* could have any Design by his pretended Vision, but to play the Devil to them; and hence they could never have admitted him to their Communion.

Peter advances several Proofs, *Acts Eight Year*
Chap. x. that Jesus is the Messiah, and after Christ's
Lord of all, which are laid before us *Ascension.*
in this Manner. (1) That it was prophesied of the *Messiah, The Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might* (i) So it is evident from the Effects thereof on his Disciples; a Spirit of Understanding, Counsel, and Might, hath rested on *Jesus of Nazareth.* And as the *Messiah* was to be anointed with the Holy Ghost to preach glad Tidings

(i) *Isaiah xi. 2.*

Tidings to the Meek, and to bind up the Broken-hearted, &c. (k) So Jesus was anointed also with the Holy Ghost for this very End, *Ver. 38.* (2) That his whole Business was to do Good; particularly he relieved Men from the Power and Oppression of the Devil, by which he made it appear, that his Power was diametrically opposite to Satan's Power and Kingdom. And all this demonstrates that God was with him: *For no Man could do Things so great and so good, unless God were with him, Ver. 38.* (3) That when Jesus was raised from the dead, he was shewed in the most unexceptionable Manner that could be, and in a Way that doth most confirm our Faith in his Resurrection among all Nations, and to all future Generations, *Ver. 41.* This will appear evident to every impartial Enquirer after Truth, upon a few Considerations. (1) Had Jesus risen from the Grave before all the People of the *Jews*, the Evidence of this Fact from Testimony had been much weakened to us: For besides they could never be absolutely certain it was he; for had all the People of *Israel* been with *Saul* and the Witch of *Endor* (l) when one ascended out of the Earth in the Likeness of *Samuel*, this could not have been a Proof of *Samuel's* Resurrection from the dead: And besides that, a Multitude vary, and are always inconsistent in their Account of any Fact that happens before them, and any different Way of telling about it, would have weakened the Credit of the whole Story; besides all this, the whole People and Nation of the *Jews* could never be thought, by the following Ages, to be so disinterested, and so credible, and so void of Suspicion in the Matter of their Testimony, as the *Witnesses chosen of God*. As Matters stand now before us, we can urge the Credit of the *Witnesses of Christ's Resurrection*; That as they were warned beforehand by their Master, so they could not but know themselves, how hazardous their Employment was, since without Power and Learning they were

(k) *Isaiah* lxi. 1. (l) *Samuel* xxviii. 13, 14.

were to combat all the Power and Policy of the World, and carry on a Religion equally contrary to the Prejudices and Lusts of Men: That no Man will adventure on the like of this, without any Motive from the Justness of the Cause, or the Satisfaction of carrying on some secular Design: That no Man will prosecute a Design which he sees will at once undo him in this World, and damn him in the next: That Men who discover neither Folly nor Lunacy in their Words and Behaviour, will not go over the Belly of educational Prejudices and worldly Interests, but upon some clear Convictions: That a great Company of wicked Men will never be intrepid or constant to Death, in a Testimony where no Fame or Applause can be expected: That Impostors will never be so fair as to refer their Hearers to Time, Place and Persons, where mighty Works are said to be done: That they will not declare a Thing to be done before the greatest Resort and Concourse of all Sorts of People, and give out publickly upon the very Spot, that such great Events happened among them, if it was in any Person's Power to disprove what they said.' On the other Hand, let us suppose the whole Nation of the Jews, at least the whole City of *Jerusalem*, had been Eye-witnesses, and the whole People had believed upon their own Knowledge, 'tis evident this Testimony would have lost much of its Evidence to other Nations. The Publishers thereof would not be so disinterested; for here Jesus's Missionaries might have preached his Doctrine with Fame and worldly Advantage, and with Security also, being in no Hazard, at least from their own Nation; or should they venture abroad through other Nations, and suffer for the Doctrine of Jesus, yet still it might be alleged a Love of Reputation among their own People, or a fond Ambition for the Credit of their own Nation, might be Motive enough for such an Undertaking. 'Tis certain their Self-denial, their Mortification to

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the

the World, could never have appeared so evident to Mankind, nor their Testimony so disinterested in this View of Things, as in the present State; nor could the Gospel have been propagate among the *Gentiles*. Did not *Moses* and the Prophets work such Miracles as were sufficient to attest a divine Power with them; yet who of the neighbouring Nations did embrace the same? So I think the Christian Religion had been confined to the *Jews*, if it had not increased in Evidence by the Opposition made to it by the *Jews*; that is to say, the violent Opposition made to it by these whose Interest it was to wish it untrue, and who had Power in their Hand by which they were enabled to examine all Persons and Things, that might any Way conduce to the giving them Light in this Matter; and on the other Hand, the Disciples, a Company of illiterate Men, their offering their Doctrine and Testimony to a fair publick Trial, without any Methods of Intrigue, or without shrinking, either for Fear or Favour, added great Reputation to their Character, as Witnesses of Christ; and hereby their Testimony has more Weight than otherwise it could have: For these two Things are evident, that Men are farer remote from any Design of Interest, Fame and worldly Pleasure, that lay their Account to contend with all the Religions of Nations, than those who have a whole Nation to favour them. That it can more easily be supposed, that Men for the Sake of a Lie will venture on the Punishment in the other World, provided they secure by it their Honour and Interest in this, than it can be supposed that Men willingly chuse all the ill Usage that can be in this World, and the severe Punishments in the next, only for the publishing a Lie, without any Prospect of Advantage whatsoever. (2.) Had Jesus risen before the Rulers of the People, so that they had been the Witnesses and Publishers of his Resurrection, neither could they have been so unexceptionable Witnesses of the Truth thereof, as the *Witnesses chosen of God*, for the

the Reasons above-mentioned. Suppose the High Priests, Scribes and Rulers, had been among the first Broachers of Christ's Resurrection, how would this cast up to the *Gentile* World? Why, natural Suspicion would have surmised, that all was but an artful Contrivance, or State-policy, being in the Hands of such as could be Masters both of the Design and Execution; and they might easily find out Reasons for this Cheat, tempting enough; it contributed to the Grandeur of their Church and Nation. But what should tempt a few unlearned Persons to preach a Doctrine so contrary to all Mens Opinions, Principles and Lusts, when they saw that nothing but Persecution and Death could be the Recompence of their so doing, will never be found out. I doubt not it was upon this very Thought that the Apostle tells, that *the Fall of the Jews is the Riches of the World, and the diminishing of them the Riches of the Gentiles* (m). Hence (3.) the surest Way of satisfying all Mankind of the Truth of Christ's Resurrection was to chuse so many as were of known Virtue and Probity, who were daily conversant with him, and who had all possible Opportunity of knowing that it was he, by his frequent Appearances to them, and their frequent and familiar Converse with him; even *eating and drinking with him after he arose from the dead*; and hence it was impossible they could be deceived: And since they preached and practised nothing but Purity, Peace, Justice, Virtue, Righteousness, Mercy, and what made for the Abolition of Satan's Kingdom, *Verses 35, 36, 38.* it cannot be imagined they would deceive others: For who can conceive that a Company of illiterate Men, and Cheats too, should furnish Mankind with the best System of Morality that ever obtained in the World; or lay the surest Foundations of Peace and Happiness that ever were laid; or spend all their Time, and their Lives too, to make all other Men truly devout, just, upright and sincere? The *fourth*

C 2

Proof

(m) *Romans xi. 12.*

Proof brought by *Peter* is, they have undertaken and executed a very hazardous Commission, in preaching that *Jesus is Lord of all*, Ver. 38. and appointed *the Judge of the quick and the dead*, Ver. 42. and nothing but their sure Persuasion of the Thing can bear them out; since no Man will cast away his Fortune, Credit and Life, for no present Advantage or future Hope. (5.) That the Prophets give Witness, that Remission of Sin is through the Name of the *Messiah* promised, Ver. 43. and particularly thro' his Sufferings; so *Isaiah* (n) *He was wounded for our Iniquities, and with his Stripes we are healed: The Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.* So *Daniel* (o), *Seventy Weeks are determined upon my People, to finish the Transgression and make an End of Sin, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity.* So *Zechariah* (p), *They shall look on me whom they have pierced and mourn. And in that Day there shall be a Fountain opened to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem for Sin and Uncleanness* (q).

The Apostle *Paul* proves *Acts* xiii. Year 12th that *Jesus was the Messiah*, or was an after *Christ's* extraordinary Person sent of God, by *Ascension.* these Arguments. (1.) That *John the Baptist*, a Man confessedly (r) of strict and austere Virtue, and who made it his sole Business to reform Mankind, did give Testimony that *Jesus was the Messiah*, Ver. 25. (2.) That *Jesus* was a just and innocent Person; for as *Jesus* himself posed the *Jews*, *Which of you can convince me of Sin?* so his Innocence was evident, *his Enemies themselves being Judges.* *I find no Fault in this Man*, saith *Pilate* (s); his Wife again saith, *Have nothing to do with*

(n) *Isa.* liii. 5, 6 (o) *Dan.* ix. 24. (p) *Zech.* xii. 10.
(q) *Zech.* xiii. 1.

(r) *Josephus*, *Lib. Ant.* says of *John the Baptist*, that he was a good Man, one that stirred up the People of the *Jews* to the Study of Piety and Justice. And he says, the *Jews* believed *Herod* was overcome by *Aretas* for taking away his Life.

(s) *Luke* xxiii. 4.

with that just Man (t). I think it remarkable, after what Manner the High Priest speaks of Jesus after his Resurrection, *Ye have filled Jerusalem with your Doctrine*, saith he to the Disciples, *and ye intend to bring this Man's Blood upon us* (u). Here are no hard Names given our Saviour, but Words are uttered which shew a great misgiving of Mind, and a Conscience of Guilt. And if they had not been restrained by the Evidence of Facts, and the Stings of their own Conscience, or if they had not thought that Jesus was an innocent Person, how would they have suffered his Disciples to avow openly to their Face that Christ was risen, that they had murdered an innocent Person; and at the same Time dismiss them, when they told them expressly, that they were still resolved to speak of the Name and Resurrection of Jesus? But then, what is further remarkable here, is the Attestation of *Judas the Traitor*; he was one of the twelve Apostles, and hence was conversant with him, and, by any Discovery he could make, he was sure to gain Favour with the Rulers of the People: He was also engaged in Point of Credit to stand to what he had done, in betraying his Master; but nothing of this being sufficient to resist the Light of his Conscience, or stop the Clamours of its Guilt, he returns the thirty Pieces of Silver, saying, *I have betrayed the innocent Blood* (x). 'Tis evident this was Fact, since *Matthew* does not tell us this as a Story done in a secret Corner, but publicly before the Rulers and People, and unless he had a Mind to ruin his own Reputation, and the Credit of his Doctrine, he could not avouch a Story that might be so easily and publicly confuted. The fatal Event of *Judas* also demonstrates the Innocence of our Saviour: For had *Judas Iscariot* any Jealousy of Fraud or Deceit, this had prevented

(t) *Matth.* xxvii. 19. (u) *Acts* v. 28. (x) *Matth.* xxvii. 4.

his hanging himself. So that here is an uncontestible Evidence, that Jesus was a just and innocent Person, since he is attested to be so by one that had all Opportunity of knowing, and wanted neither Ill-will nor Temptation to wish the contrary. (3.) That the Rulers of the *Jews*, in condemning Jesus, did actually fulfil the Prophecies concerning him, *Ver. 27.* particularly what was foretold of him by *David* (y), *Isaiah* (z), *Daniel* (a). *Zechariah* (b). (4.) That God had raised him from the Dead, *Ver. 30.* (5.) That as a Proof of this, he was seen not once or twice only, which might be liable to some Mistake, but many Days; not of Strangers, who might be deceived or imposed on by a false Appearance, but of those who had been his long and intimate Acquaintance, and could not be mistaken in his Person, because they knew him thoroughly, *Ver. 31.* (6.) That in raising Jesus to be a Saviour to *Israel*, God had done according to his Promise to *David*, that his Seed should reign for ever, *Ver. 23.* as may be seen 2 *Sam. vii. 12.* 1 *Chron. xvii. 11, 12, 13.* *Psal. lxxxix. 35, 36, 37.* *Isa. xi. 1.* which Promises made to *David* had not then, and cannot now take Effect, unless fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*. (7.) That of this Saviour to be raised to *Israel*, the Lord saith, *Psal. ii. Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*, *Ver. 30.* which is evidently spoken of the *Messiah*, as is clear from *Ver. 7, 8.* even of that Divine Person whom *David* calls his Lord, *Psal. cx. 1.* (8.) That it was prophesied of this holy One that is given a Saviour to his People, that he should not see Corruption, *Ver. 35.* compared with *Psal. xvi. 10.* which could not possibly be meant of *David* himself, since they knew he fell asleep and saw Corruption, *Ver. 36.* and unless it be applied to *Jesus*, who saw no Corruption, *Ver. 37.* that Prophecy

(y) *Psal. xxii. 16.* (z) *Isa. liii. 8.* (a) *Dan. ix. 26.* (b) *Zech. xii. 10.*

phesy was not then, and has not since, and cannot now be certainly accomplished. (9.) That a spiritual and everlasting Kingdom under the *Messiah*, after his Resurrection, in which all good Men have an Interest, is the Main of the Covenant made with *David*, the *sure Mercies* promised to him, and not any temporal Dominion settled in *David's* Family, because if it were restricted to a temporal Monarchy, then the Promise made *Isa. lv. 3. Incline your Ear, come unto me, hear and your Soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure Mercies of David*, could never be accomplished, since 'tis impossible in Nature, that all Believers shall be Kings of the Land of *Canaan*, Ver. 34. (10.) That all that he had declared of the glad Tidings of Salvation through Christ, was but an Accomplishment of the Promises made of a Saviour to their Fathers, Ver. 32, 33. particularly, (1.) It was promised to *Adam*, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent (c). And 'tis evident our first Parents could not but be sensible that the Promise meant a spiritual Deliverer; they could not but know there was some malignant Spirit in that Temptation, whereby they lost their Integrity, and fell into Sin and Misery; and if there is any Intimation of Relief to them, it must be a Relief against the Power and Malice of their greatest Enemy: For what Hope or Comfort could be afforded them, if it were told them they might bruise the Head of a silly Serpent, while, in the mean Time, they lay open to all the Attacks of powerful and invisible Devils? Or wherein could they see the Justice of the Divine Procedure, if he should punish only the silly Tool, and let the principal Cause of Man's Revolt go free? 'Tis plain then, whether these Words be considered by Way of Promise to *Adam*, or by Way of Threatening against the Cause of his Rebellion, it must be meant

(c) Gen. iii. 15.

meant of one that should come of the Seed of the Woman, who should destroy the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, and deliver Man from spiritual Bondage and Misery. (2.) To *Abraham* it was promised, that in his Seed all Nations of the Earth shall be blessed, Gen. xii. 3. and xviii. 18. And when the Promise of this Seed, wherein all Nations are to be blessed, was restricted first to the Family of *Isaac*, Gen. xvii. 21. and xxi. 12. and next to *Jacob's* Family, Gen. xxviii. 14. how was it possible for them, or any of their Posterity, to understand it of any temporal Prosperity, whereby all other Nations should be benefited? Especially when it is considered, that no Temporality was contained in that special Promise made to *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, but the Land of *Canaan*; this was the only Land of Promise to *Abraham*, vide Gen. xii. 1, 3, 7. and xv. 7. and xvii. 7. And the only Land that was promised to *Isaac*, vide Genes. xxvi. 3. And also to *Jacob*, vide Genes. xxviii. 13. and xxxv. 12. Hence 'tis evident, that neither they, nor any of their Posterity, had ever a Promise of an universal Empire over all Nations; how then could they imagine, that all Nations should be blessed in *Abraham's* Seed? Yea, which is more restrictive, in *Isaac's* Seed: Yea further, in *Jacob's* Seed; yea also, as we shall immediately see, in *Judah's* Seed, unless it be understood of a spiritual Salvation and Blessing brought about by some extraordinary Person, to be born of the Seed of *Abraham*, of *Isaac* and of *Jacob*, wherein all Nations should have an Interest. (3.) It was prophesied of *Judah*, Gen. xlix. 10. that *the Scepter should not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet*, which the LXX well translate, *A Prince shall not fail from Judah, nor a Ruler from his Loins, till Shiloh come*; or again as the LXX, *Till the Promise laid up in Store come, and he is the Expectation of the Nations* (d).

In

(d) ἐκκληρονομήσων ἐκ Ἰούδα, καὶ ἡγούμενος ἐκ τῶν
μνησῶν

In which Words, as there is a plain Reference to the promised Seed, wherein all Nations shall be blessed; or to him who is called by *Haggai*, *The Desire of all Nations*; so they plainly point to us what Kind of Blessing, and what Kind of Saviour is meant; for being expressly said, that the Tribe of *Judah* should never want Power and Rule, till this extraordinary Person prophesied of should come; this manifestly proves, that *Jacob* meant not here a temporal but a spiritual Deliverer; otherwise the Prophecy would run, that the *Jews* should never want a Ruler till they had an extraordinary one, or never want a Prince till they got the Prince of Peace, or that extraordinary King that was contained as a great Treasury in the Promises; or, in a Word, that the *Jewish* Government should never be abolished till it was perfected. I suppose none will imagine, that any Thing like this could be *Jacob's* Meaning; and hence 'tis evident that Prophecy could not be understood but of a spiritual Redeemer and Lord. This will appear more from the other Prophecies of the *Messiah* that are mentioned before (e).

We have a very illustrious Prophecy of the *Messiah's* Resurrection from the dead, *Zeph. iii. 8.* according to the LXX Version, Δια τὸ τοῦ ἁγίου μου, λέγει Κύριος, εἰς ἡμέραν ἀναστασῶν με εἰς μέτρον, i. e. Wait on me, saith the Lord, untill the Day of my Resurrection,

μηδὲ αὐτὰ ἔτι ἐν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ καὶ αὐ-
τος προσήκει ἐξῆν

(e) 'Tis so far from being true, what Mr. *Colins* alledges that the *Jews* had never any Expectation of an extraordinary Deliverer, till after the *Babylonish* Captivity, that on the contrary, the first Prophecies of the *Messiah* are so clear, and of so determinate a Sense, as to give Light to all the following Prophecies, that sometimes happen to be more short, and therefore obscure, except where they specify the Time, as *Daniel*, *Haggai*, and *Malachi* do.

urrection, for a Testimony, which the Hebrew, with a small Variation, doth admit of.

We find the Apostles proving *Acts* Year 181*b* xv. the Abrogation of the *Mosaic Dispensation*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*, by these Arguments. (1.) That *Immanuel* had from ancient Times made Choise of the Gentiles to believe in his Word, and be a People to him, *Ver. 7. (f)* that is, it was but conform to the Prophecies made by *Isaiah Chap. xlii. 1. Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth.* No Question this is *Immanuel* spoken of *Chap. vii. and viii. He shall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles.* And again, *Ver. 6. I the Lord have called thee in Righteousness, and given thee for a Covenant of the People, for a Light to the Gentiles.* (2.) That God had given a very remarkable Proof of his fulfilling this Promise, by giving the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, *Ver. 8.* (3.) That good old *Simeon*, whom they knew to be a just and devout Man, and who expected the Messiah was to come at that Time, according as was determined by the Prophets, and who also was inspired by the Holy Ghost, did prophesy that Jesus was to be a Light to the Gentiles, *Ver. 14.* compared with *Luke ii. 25, 32.* (4.) That Jesus had also declared, that his Word of Grace should be preached to the Gentiles by working many Miracles for their Conversion. (5.) That the Words of the Prophets agree to this, as when 'tis said, that in *Abraham's Seed all Nations should be blessed; that the Heathen should be his Inheritance, and the utmost Lines of the Earth his Possession; that he should be a Light to the Gentiles, and Salvation to the Ends of the Earth; particularly Amos saith, Chap. xi. Ver. 11, 12. After this I will return and build the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen, that the Residue of Men might seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my Name is called.* Paul

(f) Vide *Synod. Serm. P. 4.* for clearing of this Version of *Acts xv. 7.*

Paul writes his first Epistle to the Thessalonians, who being Gentiles, he lays before them the Grounds upon which they had believed the Gospel. (1.) That God had attested the same by an extraordinary Power of working Miracles, and by the Effusion of the Holy Ghost, Chap. i. Ver. 5. and hence they might be infallibly certain, that he would never lend his Power, or send his Spirit to confirm a Lie. (2.) That the turning them from Idols to serve the living God, was the Effect of the Gospel, Ver. 9. q. d. The Gospel recovers Mankind from that dreadful Superstition and Idolatry they were sunk into, when they served dead Lumber, and said their Prayers to their own Piece of Work, instead of serving the Living God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth. (3.) That he preached nothing but what became the Purity and Perfection of God, Chap. ii. 3. So that allowing it but possible, that God should make a Revelation of his Will, it cannot be inconsistent with his Doctrine, nor contradict the Purity required in the Gospel. And as little can Error be the Cause of Truth, or the best of Effects, as the Law and Religion of Nature, in its greatest Perfection proceed from Cheat and Imposture, the worst of Causes. (4.) That they themselves were Witnesses, that in all his Demour he had behaved himself holily and justly, Ver. 10. And can it be imagined, that Men who are serious Promoters of Holiness, Justice, Mercy, and Goodness, should yet be obstinate Cheats, and lay down their Lives at once for Holiness and Imposture? (5.) That he cannot be charged with any corrupt Design; not of Pleasure, Chap. ii. 3. not of flattering Men's Vices, Ver. 4. not of Covetousness, Ver. 5. not of vain Glory, Ver. 6. And 'tis altogether inconceivable, that Men should be at so indefatigable Pains in cheating others, when they cannot serve any End to themselves by it. (6.) That he warned them beforehand, that they should encounter Sufferings of every Kind

Kind for the Sake of the Gospel, and they laid their Account for the same, *Chap. iii. 3, 4.* And what but a firm Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel, and the Hopes of the Reward it promises, could prompt some to preach, and others to receive the Doctrine of the Gospel, which they knew would ruin all their Affairs in this Life? For how can it be supposed, that Men will expose themselves deliberately to the Fury of Earth and the Fire of Hell, for what could not in any Respect profit them? If this were possible, then no Self-Love, no Principle of Self-preservation is rooted in the human Nature.

We find *Paul* at *Athens*, the very Year 20th Seat of all the *Gentile Learning*, *Acts after Christ's* *Chap. xvii.* where he gallantly combats the *Greek Sophists* with their own Weapons, that is, with *Wisdom and Philosophy*. He observes, (1.) That they were much addicted to the Worship of Demons (g), *Ver. 22.* 'Tis easy to conjecture how the Apostle did expose this Folly, by the smart Harangues which the primitive Fathers made up after him upon this Topic, such as *Lactantius*, *Tertullian*, *Arnobius*, *Athanasius*; ' Since you have so many Sets and Corporations of Gods, as there are different Nations and Territories in the World, we call upon you to let us know which of these Deities 'tis worth a Man's while to recommend his Interest unto, which are ablest to protect, assist, and prosper him. ' But it would be a Reproach to the Reader's Understanding, to surmise he wants a Demonstration of the Vanity of the *Gentile Worship*; or to insist on a Jargon of these impertinent Ceremonies wherein they placed their Worship. (2.) The Apostle observes to these *Athenians*, that he saw an Altar with this Inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. If the Occasion of this Inscription was, as

Diogenes

(g) *ἑνὶ δαίμονι ἑσέβας.*

Diogenes Laertius tells, (if my Memory doth not fail me) that the *Athenians* being wasted with a grievous Pestilence, and after they had wearied themselves to no Purpose, in Supplications to all their Deities, by the Advice of *Epimenides* they prayed to that God, whoever he was, that had Power over the Pestilence, tho' unknown to them; upon which immediately the Plague being stayed, they erected an Altar with this Inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. If this was the Occasion of the Altar, *Paul* begins his Argument to this Purpose, That as it was not a rational Service, so it became not Men of Philosophy and good Sense to worship they knew not what; and hence they could not reasonably take it amiss, if he should declare to them the Deity whom they ignorantly worship, Ver. 23. Or if the Altar was erected upon this Occasion, viz. the *Persians* having invaded *Greece* with a vastly numerous Army, the Image of the God *Pan* meeting with *Philippidas* in the Way, promised Assistance to the *Greeks*, but complained he was neglected in Worship; and hence the *Athenians* not knowing who this God was, yet being willing to testify their Gratitude, raised an Altar with this Inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD (b). And as not only the *Platonick* Philosophers, but also some of the *Stoicks* were accustomed to speak of the *Logos*, if *Pan* was the *Logos*, as *Plato* thought (i), this gave *Paul* an Opportunity of declaring unto them the true *Logos*, viz. that *Jesus* is he (k); and for this End he observes, (1.) That there is a

D

Creator

(b) *Peleus* ita. (i) *Cratyl.* Page 280.

(k) *Plutarch. de Oracul. defectu*, tells a long and strange Story to this Purpose, that he heard from *Emilian* the Rhetorician, that he was one Time sailing in a Ship to *Italy*, where the Master of the Ship was one *Thamnus* an *Egyptian*, and when they were passing by the *Echinod* isles, a Voice came from one of these Isles, *Thamnus*; to which when he had answered upon the third Call, *When ye pass*, said the Voice, by *Palodes*, cry to them, that the great God *Pan* is dead. This happened while *Tiberius* was Emperor, says *Eusebius*, *Demonst. Evang.* p. 307

Creator of Heaven and Earth, that as every House is built by some Man, so this glorious Fabrick of Heaven and Earth must be made by some Hand, and whoever has made the same, he is God, *Ver. 24.* And certain it is, that 'tis easier by far to conceive an infinite Power and infinite Wisdom to exist from Eternity, than any finite Power and Wisdom, and much less an eternal Succession of Finites. (2.) That the Frame of Nature demonstrates it has not only a Creator, but by the regular and steady Course of its Motions, and the Aptitude of every Thing to reach its proper End, (a Thing impossible to be effected by blind Chance) it declares also it has a Lord that daily presides over and governs the same. And this Lord of all can be no other than the Creator of all, *ibid.* (3.) That this Creator and Lord cannot be confined in a Temple, *ibid. q. d.* What can be more absurd than to acknowledge these for Lords of the Universe, which their Keepers can turn the Key upon, and make close Prisoners as oft as they shut the Temple-doors? (4.) That he who is God cannot be worshipped by any Image or Representation made by Men's Hands, *Verse 25. q. d.* To lavish Gold out of the Bag, and weigh Silver in the Balance, and hire a Goldsmith to make a God of it (1), a God that cannot remove from its Place, unless you bear it upon your Shoulders, is infinitely absurd; and no less absurd will it be to worship Images, as Representatives of Deities, or as Instruments of Conveyance between them and us: For why should not the Deity chuse rather to represent and explain himself by the living Organs of a living Man, than by the dead and insensitive Resemblances of a Man? Methinks 't were more worthy of a God to speak through the Bodies of Men, which are not of human Formation, than by the Work of a mortal Hand, or the cumbrous Figures made in Wood or Stone. If there be any Thing in an Image that deserves Divine Honours, it must be the Me-

chanick's

(1) Isa. xl vi. 6, 7.

chanick's Skill and Genius; he was in Being before the Statues he made, and he made them according to his own Fancy and Pleasure: If therefore ought be worshipped of the two, it should be the Statuary (*m*). (5.) He observes, That this great Creator and Lord is not a poor and indigent Being, *Ver. 25.* but is so immensely opulent, and compleatly happy in himself, as that 'tis impossible he should want, or find himself unprovided of any Thing, seeing he gives to all Life, and Breath, and all Things. (6.) That God hath made all Mankind of one Blood, or one Original, *Ver. 26.* as is evident from the Origine of Nations, which Moses give us an Account of (*n*), the only rational, clear, and consistent History of the peopling of the World that obtains in the World; which may also be proven by Places, Facts, Names of Nations and Cities, and several other Monuments mentioned in the several Histories of Nations; not to say that their own Accounts are evidently so fabulous and inconsistent as no Man gives any Credit to them (*o*). (7.) That this God working in us and about us, on the Right and the left, may be as sensibly perceived as our Life or Souls within us, *Ver. 27.* or he is as perceptible by us as a Man can be; (if Man is denominated so from his rational Soul) since 'tis only by their Operations we can perceive, that either ourselves or others have Souls in them; and we may as certainly and infallibly perceive God in the daily sensible Operations of his Wisdom, Power, and Goodness. (8.) That we are God's Offspring, which when some of their Philosophers do own, *Ver. 28.* they must necessarily understand the same with respect to the Soul, the unseen, vital, and immortal Substance in Man, otherwise Brutes, Stocks, and Stones, might also be called the same; but this no Man ever did: For tho' some do call irrational and inanimate Creatures God's Workmanship, yet

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never

(*m*) Athan. advers. Gentes. (*n*) Gen. x.
(*o*) Vide Bocharu Phaleg.

never his Progeny; he is the Former of Bodies, but the Father only of Spirits. (9.) If humane Souls are not like Gold, or Silver, or Stone graven by Man's Art and Device, and so cannot be represented by them, much less can the Godhead be like to any such Piece of Art, or any Work of Man's Hand, or be made visible by any malleated Representations and Figures.

These are the Principles laid down by the Apostle before the *Athenians*, which, for the most Part, are Principles *ex concessis*, being he either cites or alludes to the *Placita* of their own Sophists. One of your Poets (p) said, that *in God we live, move, and have our Being*; that *we are God's Offspring*. Another saith (q), that the Divine Mind hath made, and orderly disposeth all Things. Another saith (r), Where is God? Is he shut up in a Temple? But is there any Reason or Religion in confining God to a Cell of Darkness! The Apostle having thus demonstrated there is a God, and a Providence, and a Soul in Man, he subsumes. (10.) There will be a Day of Judgment, *Ver. 31.* And this follows naturally and necessarily from the Premises; for if there be a God, he must be a holy, just, good, and wise Being: But how could it consist with his Holiness, if he testified no Love to Virtue, nor Hatred of Vice? And how could either the one or the other of these appear, if there was no future Retribution? Since 'tis evident that all Things fall alike to all in this Life, and there is one Event to the Good and to the Evil: Or what Notion could we have of the Divine Goodness, if it dispensed alike Favours to the Virtuous and to the Vicious? Or if he that is abandoned to all Manner of Evil, and sticks not to affront the Author of his Being, shall be as well dealt with, as he that is careful in the Study of Probity and Goodness, as it would be, were there no After-reckoning? Or how could the
Justice

(p) *Aratus.*

(q) *Plato, Euseb. Præp. Evang. Lib. 11. Cap. 10.* thinks they borrowed such Notions from Revelation. (r) *Heracitus.*

Justice of God be seen, if Men might sin against him as they would, and yet be as safe as he that promotes Virtue? And yet were there no future Rewards and Punishments; so promiscuous are the Divine Dispensations, that Affairs could have no other Aspect. Again, if there were no future State, wherein could the Wisdom of God appear in enduing Man with a rational Soul? A Soul that (when Sense concerns itself with nothing but material and mortal Objects) delights to think on, and converse with immaterial Objects, and affects to dwell on the Idea of Immortality. If Man is furnished with the Induements of Reason and Reflection, yea, even with the Power of contemplating the Author of his Being; and if all these Powers are given him only in Subserviency to the animal, mortal Life, this would be more incongruous to the Wisdom of an intelligent Being, than that a Man should be curiously instructed in all Arts and Sciences, in order to herd Swine. Yea further, was there no future State, as Man in these Circumstances could have no higher View than the pleasing of the animal Appetite, his Reason in this Case would be so far from contributing to his Satisfaction, as that it could not but check and disturb the same. The very Reflection, that after he has eat and drunk for a short While in this World, he must next lie down and die, and then the whole Story of him is ended; this very Thought, I say, that Death totally finishes him, and extinguishes his Life and Being for ever, cannot (if he dare think on it) but confound all his Satisfaction in worldly Things. How then could it consist with the Wisdom of a good Being, to indue Man with Reason and Reflection only for his Torment; or to implant Powers in Man superior to these in Brutes, only with a Design to make them more miserable than *the Beasts that perish*: From these Points again the Apostle argues, (11.) The Necessity of Repentance, *Ver. 30.* which follows of itself from the Premises: For if Man is an accountable

Being, (as is already proven) and if it is to God he must give his Accounts, and if he has in any thing offended God, which a Day of Judgment supposeth, which the Malignity of the Wicked proves, and which even the Heathen World confessed by their Sacrifices, and by their Complaints of the Depravation of Mankind, and the Wickedness of the Age they had fallen into: All this shews an absolute Necessity of Repentance. Who that believes there is a God, has not Reason to be uneasy and afraid at the Thought of having offended him? Or who that believes he has offended him, can expect his Favour without Repentance? No Man can hope for what he cannot pray; and can any who believes any thing of God pray, that the Lord would forgive, tho' he has a Mind to affront his Majesty still, and do wickedly in his Sight? Next, the Apostle, (12.) preaches Christ to them, as one raised from the Dead; and therefore able to save them from Sin, and from Death, and Hell the Wages thereof, *Ver. 31.* Having proven that all the World is under Guilt, as is evident from the Necessity of Repentance, this paves his Way for the Doctrine of Salvation thro' a crucified Jesus. The Connection is clear: If we are guilty of any Offence against God, and if an Offence is to be estimated according to the Dignity of the Person offended, as all Laws and Justice, and the Light of Nature do proportion them, then an Offence against a Being of infinite Excellency, has an infinite Evil, and must have an infinite Demerit in it: And what Remedy can a guilty Sinner find for this? What Equivalent can he offer for an Injury, which being done against God, thereby becomes of an infinite Malignity? And Guilt naturally working Fear, which Fear could yet never take Place, unless there were some Foundation for the same; for Nature implants no Passions without their Objects, or for which there is no Occasion; and a Fear of the Divine Punishments again, unless it be certain of a feasible Way of Relief,

liet, its natural Effect would be to alienate the Mind from God, and to dread him only as a *Mormo*, or some terrible Appearance: Hence it is that Repentance itself he could not attain, unless he knew the Way of finding God merciful, in the Pardon of those Sins which he does repent of and forsake; or, at least, have an express Declaration from God, that he will accept of the repenting and returning Sinner. And the Heathen World were not insensible of this; they were sensible of their being obnoxious to the Displeasure of the Deity, as their propitiatory Sacrifices, their Ablutions and Lustrations do intimate. The common Sort of them, who lived only to fill up the Number of the humane Race, never adverted how *impossible* it was that the Blood of Bulls or Goats could wash away Sin: The more considerate among them discovered the Vanity of their Rites and Ceremonies, and were made to confess they knew not the Way how to appease the incensed Justice of Heaven. And when Ignorance in this Point of the greatest Importance to Mankind, was either confessed, or betrayed among the Heathen World, the Apostle reveals Christ, as the only Person that can atone Justice and expiate Sin, and proves him to be so by this sure Demonstration, that God had raised him from the Dead.

Paul writes his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, wherein he touches upon these Arguments as Proofs of his Mission: And, (1.) That it was made evident to them, that *Christ is the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*, Chap. i. Ver 24. (f). (2.) That Instruments, mean and contemptible of themselves, were made Choice of for preaching the Gospel, Ver. 27, 28. This was owned by the greatest Adversaries of Christianity. *Lucian* called them ignorant.

(f) This Argument is particularly explained in Synodical Sermon.

norant (t). *Celsus* called them ignoble Rusticks (u). *Hierocles* called *Peter* and *Paul* untaught Mechanics (x). *Tertullian* says, they reckon us simple (y). *Lactantius*, we are reckoned simple and foolish (z). And methinks by this they wanted a very essential Qualification of Impostors, and what was especially requisite for so high Undertakers, who had the Plot of making all the World stoop to the Laws they thought fit to impose on them. But the Apostle here turns the Argument upon this very Point, how should a few unlearned Men, Men of a hated Nation, and yet of a more hate Religion, without Learning, and without Experience in the World, and without any Power or Policy, take it in their Head, to run down all the Wit, Power, and Policy of the World, and confound all its learned Wights, and by preaching the despised Doctrine of *the Cross of Christ*, prevail more with the Hearts of Mankind, prepossessed both with Prejudices and Lusts, to engage them in true and solid Virtue, than the Philosophers do with all their Philosophy or Wisdom: This cannot be conceived without a most certain Evidence of the Truth of their Doctrine, and a Divine Power assisting them, in bearing them up in the publishing the same. (3.) That since the Word searches and reveals what's in every Man's Heart, it must be from God, whose Peculiarity it is to know the Heart, *Chap. ii. Ver. 11. For if no Man knows the Things in Man, save the Spirit of a Man within him*, then if there be a Word which comprehends every Man's Case, whether good or bad, that Word must be from the Spirit of God, the only Searcher of Hearts. (4.) That if the Spirit of Man cannot know the Things of a Man like himself, much less can he know the Things of God, *Ver. 10, 11. For as all natural Knowledge is from the Ideas which either Sensation* or

(t) *Perigr.* p. 338. (u) *Orig. contra Celsus, Lib. 3, p. 145.*
 (x) *Euseb. Præp. Evan.* p. 5, 15. (y) *Tertul. Apol. Cap. 49.*
 (z) *Lactan. Inst.* p. 252.

or Reflection furnisheth the Mind with; so by none of these Ways can we have proper Conceptions of the Deity, or of the Modes of his Operations and Counsels: For as Sensation takes in but sensible Objects, so Reflection hath only our own Soul for its Standard and Measure, which, if it be not a Thing heterogeneous, if compared with the Nature of God, it is at least too scrimp an Image to give us either a full or clear Representation of him (a). (5.) That nothing but a full Evidence of the Truth of the Gospel, could induce the Apostles to undertake the many Hardships and Hazards that attended the preaching thereof, *Chap. iv. 9—14.* Can it be thought, that Men would divest themselves of all Regard to any Happiness in Time and in Eternity, and expose themselves to Poverty, Misery, Persecution, Torments and Death, and Damnation; and all for nothing, or no End that can be thought of! as it would be, if they were not convinced their Doctrine is true. (6. That they had daily Experience among themselves of the divers Gifts, and different Operations of the Spirit of God; that *to one was given the Word of Wisdom, to another the Word of Knowledge; to one the Gift of healing, to another the working of Miracles, to another Prophecy, to another the discerning of Spirits, to another divers Kinds of Tongues, to another the Interpretation of Tongues* by the Spirit of God, *Chap. xii. Verse 4—11.* (7.) That Christ after his Resurrection was seen of *Cephas, then of the Twelve, after that he was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once, of whom the greatest Part remained alive unto that present Time, Chap. xv. Ver. 5, 6.* And hence they were Witnesses whether the Apostle spake the

(a) *Trismegistus, Lib. 8. Sect. 3, 4, 7, 8.* tells, The Malice of Ignorance surrroundeth all the Earth, corrupteth the Soul shut up in the Body, not suffering it to arrive at the Havens of Salvation. - It labours to make good these Things that only seem, which are judged by the Senses, but Things that truly are, it hides and envelopeth in much Matter. - Seek one that may conduct you to the Door of Truth and Knowledge.

the Truth: And I think any reasonable Man will yield here, that if the Apostle had not been sure of this Fact, he would never have advanced a Point which might be disproven by two hundred and fifty at least, of those living Witnesses, to whom he appeals. And 'tis evident also, if it was a Cheat, or fabulous Story, these five hundred have been admitted into the Secret, or else the Apostle had ruined the Credit of his Cause for ever; since here three or four hundred Persons had all Assurance possible, by the Story he tells of them, that all was Cheat and Trick. In a Word, we cannot have higher Evidence of a Fact, than five hundred Witnesses; since the Wit of Man cannot contrive a Reason why five hundred may be mistaken, but by the same Reason five hundred thousand may be mistaken also: And again, for the same Reason that five hundred may concur in a Cheat and Imposture, so may also five Million; and with more Reason, because they can with more Certainty and Safety too prosecute their Design. And again, if five hundred living Witnesses, that are as sure, and as authentick a Proof of any Fact, as any Number that can be assigned; if they, I say, be not deemed sufficient to satisfy all the Generation then living, that Christ was risen, then though Jesus had appeared, after his Resurrection, to all and every one living in that Age, this could not be sufficient to satisfy the succeeding Generations that he was risen from the dead. The Reason is evident, because the Testimony of living Witnesses is always more authentick, because less liable to Fraud, than the Testimony, even recorded, of those that are dead: So that was there any Strength in the Infidels Argument upon this Point, it will amount to this, that no Testimony can possibly convey to us any Certainty. And again, that though God had a mind to vouchsafe to us a Revelation of his Will, that yet 'tis impossible he can give us any sufficient Evidence of the same; that is he cannot (according to their Way of Reasoning) satisfy us of the
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the same by any extraordinary Works, if we do not see them: And hence no Man is bound to receive a Revelation, unless extraordinary Facts be done before him. And then, on the other Hand, if every Man had Miracles wrought before him, they would become ordinary Things; and hence they could be no more Miracles, and no more Evidences: As for Instance, a Resurrection from the dead would no more affect Men in this View of Things, than the ordinary Formation of Mankind: So that, I say, if this Objection of Infidels have any Colour of Argument in it, it would turn to this Point, that God cannot give a Revelation of his Mind, or if he do, 'tis impossible for him to give sufficient Evidence of the same. The Absurdity of which cannot be aggravated by any Thing more absurd than itself.

Paul writes his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, wherein he offers several Things to convince them his Doctrine was of God; particularly (1.) That the holy Change, made in their Hearts and Lives, did sufficiently attest that his Doctrine was of God, *Chap. iii. Ver. 3.* A good Effect must always have a good Cause. 'Tis in God we live, move, and have our Being; and if we are enabled to live to God, that must also be in him, and in a Way that's peculiarly from him. 2. That his Carriage was quite the Reverse of an Impostor, since he had renounced the hidden Things of Dishonesty, and had not walked in Craftiness, nor had been palliating sinful Courses with plausible Reasonings, and fleshly Apologies, and had their Consciences on his Side attesting his Truth and Sincerity, *Chap. iv. Ver. 2.* (3.) That no Reason can be assigned, why he should so willingly chuse a Series and Complication of Miseries and Hardships, if it were not for a joyful Hope of a future Happiness upon the Truth of the Gospel, *Chap. vi. Ver. 4, 5, 9, 10.* Men are naturally in Love with this World, and the Enjoyments thereof, such as Ease, Credit, Riches, Pleasures; and

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Fear.

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no Man will, or can renounce them but for a better Hope: And that which can prevail with Man to renounce all his sensitive Comforts, must be of greater Power, and have stronger Influence upon him than all worldly Temptations: So that no Motive could be strong enough to carry them on, but a certain Persuasion of the Truth. Some modern Infidels turn it upon Ambition, Vanity, and the Affectation of Singularity. Strange! Can any Man be supposed to be ambitious of Poverty, Reproaches, Tortures, Miseries? Ambitious of Miseries for Misery's Sake, and of Disgrace for Disgrace's Sake! What could they be vain of? They pretended not to be the Authors, but only the Publishers of that new Doctrine: And was it possible they could all reach the same Applause, being five hundred of them that attested Christ's Resurrection? And can it be supposed that Men, carried to such a desperate Enterprize, only by a Principle of Vanity, should yet be so self-denied to Pride, as to feel no Heart-burning at the out-shining Reputation of others; but tho' eclipsed, they'll rather die, die a thousand Deaths, than not serve the Vanity of a few, who offer nothing, not the least Thing, to balance their perpetual Sufferings, Loss and Misery? Either the five hundred saw Christ risen or not; if they did, they were acted by true Principles; if not, as the Apostle's referring the Matter to their Testimony, was sufficient to detect the Cheat to them; so there were too many of them to affect Singularity, especially at such Expence as the Loss of their Reputation, as well as every other valuable Thing in the World. Would one of the first three among them tamely have submitted to the Censure of one he might think but a Novice in Comparison of himself, if ruled by Vanity? *Gal. ii. 11, 12.* And after *Paul* had thus reprimanded *Peter* for his temporizing with the Jews, if *Peter*, on the other Hand, recommend *Paul* and his Epistles so warmly, *2 Peter iii. 15.* how does this consist with a vain Temper? In short, the eager Disputes that happened

happened among themselves, and the free and open Reasoning of one another into the right Side of the Question, makes it evident they acted openly and with upright Hearts.

Paul writes his Epistle to the Romans, wherein he lays down several Proofs of the Gospel, viz. (1.) That Christ was promised by the Prophets in the Old Testament, Chap. i. Ver. 2. as is proven already. (2.) That it was prophesied of him, that he was to be of the Seed of David according to the Flesh, Ver. 3. And 'tis evident now to us, if this Promise was not fulfilled in Jesus Christ, 'tis impossible any Man can ever be satisfied of the Accomplishment thereof, because no Man can now distinguish David's Progeny from the other Jews. (3.) That Jesus declared himself to be the Son of God, or that extraordinary Person promised to the Fathers, by a Power which manifested itself to be divine, since no Man could do such mighty Works unless God were with him; by the Spirit of Holiness which he gives to his Followers; for as nothing can subdue the strong Lusts and Passions that are ingrained in Mankind by Nature, but a very mighty Power, so no evil Cause can have a Hand in so good a Work, as the turning all the Powers and Affections of the Soul God-ward, and moderating our Appetites, Fancy and Passions, with Respect to every other Object: By his raising up some from the dead (b) whereby he manifested, that Life and Death is in his Hand. And the Jews own, that 'tis only the holy and blessed One that hath the Keys of the Sepulchre in his Hand, as is observed

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(b) I cannot think this means Christ's own Resurrection because if so, it would be *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως ἐν νεκρῶν*, and not *ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν*, as in the Text. I know no Place in the New Testament where *ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν* is meant of Christ's Resurrection alone, nor doth the Phrase clear such a Sense. His Resurrection is spoke of Chap. iv. Ver. 25.

out of some of their Rabbins. (c) (4.) That the Philosophy of the *Gentiles* was far from being sufficient to lead Men in Righteousness and Virtue, and conduct them to future Happiness, as is manifest from the universal Idolatry and Debauchery that reigned among them, *Ver.* 21—32. I know not of a better Commentary upon these Verses, than what we find in one of the Fathers (d). ‘ The first of the
 ‘ Creature-rivals that were set in the Throne of God,
 ‘ by the vain Imagination of Man, were the Sun, the
 ‘ Moon, and the other Luminaries of Heaven;—and
 ‘ from adoring the superior Bodies they soon stooped
 ‘ below the inferior. And now another Set of imaginary Deities come in Play, the Air, the Meteors,
 ‘ and all the Phenomina of the Atmosphere were set
 ‘ up for God. This Reign lasted not long, but they
 ‘ grew impatient of a new Election, and to the constituent Principles and Particles of the grosser Bodies were entered into a Partnership of Divinity:
 ‘ And now being got as low as Dirt and Mud——
 ‘ they made Gods of one another, Men——nay, the
 ‘ Pictures and Images of dead Men were admitted into the College of divine Powers. And so deplorably and desperately were their very Senses corrupted and depraved, that all these Adorations and
 ‘ Devotions, which are the infinite God’s peculiar
 ‘ and eternal Right, were at last made over and appropriate to Trunks of Trees and Lumps of Stone,
 ‘ to all the Reptiles and Vermine of Water and Earth,
 ‘ and to the fierce and ravenous wild Beasts of the
 ‘ Field.—’Tis hard to conceive how they could yet
 ‘ out-do all this; but nevertheless they pressed further, and stain’d their Souls with yet darker and
 ‘ deeper Coulers of Impiety and Superstition.—
 ‘ For such a palpable Darkness had overspread their
 ‘ Understanding, that they brought upon the Stage
 ‘ uncouth

(c) *Pirk. R. Eliezer.* (d) *Athan. cont. Gent.* in *Parker’s* Version, with very small Variation.

uncouth chimerical Forms and Monsters, such as Nature never conceived or produced. And when they had dressed up these Scarcrows, they consecrate even these into Objects of Worship.—They went yet greater Length, that animal Pleasure, Lust and Appetite, even that was preferred to a God-head, and most ceremoniously invoked and worshipped.' By which every one may see how Mankind, so greatly sunk in Corruption, and so wretchedly abandoned to Impiety, stood in Need of a Revelation. And let none imagine, that this happened to be the State of Rome, and of the several Nations, only at that Time *Paul* wrote this Epistle: For whether one reads the History of the Bible, or Pagan Histories, he will find the Heathen World enveloped in this Darkness and Stupidity for two thousand Years at least, before our Redeemer came down to this lower World: So that if two thousand Years before the coming of this great Prophet from Heaven, and all the Years since his coming to this World, be a long enough Time for a sufficient Trial, among the Heathen Nations, whether or no the Light of Nature be a sufficient Guide, this Light is *tried and found wanting*. (5.) That though the Light of Nature did manifest an eternal Power and God-head, *Ver. 20.* a Thing cognoscible by that Light, *Ver. 19.* and was sufficient to render them inexcusable in their *passing by the Creator (e), to worship the Creature*, *Ver. 25.* yet it was very defective in several Things of the greatest Importance to Mankind: As for Instance, (1.) It cannot reform Man's Heart and Life, *Chap. iii. Ver. 9.—19.* So far was it from training up the Soul in true Virtue, that none of the several Sects of Philosophers had any right Notion thereof. 'Tis true the *Platonists*, who borrowed many Things from the *Jews*, (as *Numenius* calls *Plato* himself *Moses Atticissimus*) have several excellent Sentiments; yet *Justin*

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Martyr

(e) So I think *παρά του κτίαντα* signifies.

Martyr shews (f), that *Plato* fell into the same Mistakes about the Gods he reproves in *Homer*; and *Lactantius* quarrels him, tho' he speaks of one God, yet little or nothing of Piety; and he says, 'He who is ignorant of Piety, is also ignorant of Justice.'

(g) The *Stoicks*, by pretending to vanquish the Passions, turned Men into senseless Images, thereby impeaching the wise Author of our Being, as if he had implanted the Passions for no Purpose. The *Peripateticks*, by making Happiness consist in the Action of Virtue, wandered from Virtue, by giving that the Name thereof which wanted both a right Principle and a right End, and also a certain Rule. *Cicero*, after he had pick'd up the best Things he could find in the *Platonick*, *Stoick*, and *Academick* Philosophy, in *Lib. 1. de Officiis*, the most consummate Piece of his moral Philosophy, gives this as his perfect System of Virtue, *Omne quod honestum est id quatuor partium oritur ex aliqua; aut enim in perspicentia veri solertiâq; versatur, aut in hominum societate tenenda, aut in animi excelsi magnitudine, aut in modestia & temperantia*. And whoever acknowledge a supreme Being, will own, I think, there is a very material Flaw in that Scheme of Morality, that professes no Religion or Piety towards God.

The *Epicureans* are called a *Herd of Swine* by a Poet of their own. And *Lucretius* his tragical Death makes it evident, that great Man of their Sect could not find a Happiness in the Gardens of *Epicurus*.

And as the Heathen World were so benighted in Darkness, as neither to know, and far less to agree wherein Virtue consisted, and least of all in the System of Virtues, so also they wanted sufficient Motives to restrain them from Vice, and constrain them to Virtue. The most powerful, and the only sufficient Incentives to true Virtue, at least to the Generality of Mankind, are the Punishments and Rewards in

(f) *Justin Martyr, Orat. Par.* (g) *Lact. Inst. Lib. 5.*

in the other World. But these they were far from having Assurance of, as 'tis evident from that Doubtfulness and Misgiving of Mind, *Cicero*, *Antoninus Philosophus*, and even the great *Socrates*, utter themselves to this Purpose: Or if they speak of a Soul's future Existence in *Hades*, they represent its State either so grossly, as to flatter and encourage Vice, or so meanly, as not to take with any generous Mind (*b*).

(2.) It cannot justify Mankind, *Chap. iii. Verses 19—27*. The very written Law cannot reach this End, much less the Law of Nature. And 'tis evident whatever Notions the Heathen might have of Pardon, for mere Mercy's Sake, or, more grossly, for their Sacrifices Sake, yet as to the Justification of their State and Person, before the supreme Judge, they had not so much as a Notion, yea hardly a Word for the same, at least the old *Greeks* or *Latins*: And yet if it be owned there is a righteous Tribunal in the other World, and again that God's Judgment is always according to Truth, how, upon such Concessions, a Person that offends in many Things can be pronounced or absolved as righteous, when *bonum est integra causa*, as they speak; or how God can pronounce a Person righteous that is far from being so, will be hard to conceive.

(3.) The Law of Nature is not sufficient to convince Mankind of Sin, *Chap. vii. Ver. 7*. 'Tis only by some Law there can be the Knowledge of Sin; and 'tis evident the Heathens had no clear and certain Law to convince them. *Plato* allowed of a Community of Wives in his Commonwealth. Among some of the polished Heathens Theft was allowed. *Cato*, one of the most virtuous among the *Romans*, is disadvantageously represented by the *Lyrick Poet*, if he did not often intoxicate himself.

*Narratur & Prisci Catonis,
Sape mero caluisse virtus,*

And

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(*b*) *Homer* represents *Achilles*, that great Hero, to be a very silly Soul, when conversing with *Ulysses* in *Hades*, *Odyss.*

And 'tis certain the Heathen World took no Notice of what the Apostle calls *Concupiscence*. (6.) That there were antient Prophecies of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, Chap. ix. Verse 25. Chap. x. Verse 19, 20. and Chap. xv. Verse 9, 10, 11, 12. As for Instance, *Hosea* says, Chap. ii. 23. *I will call them my People which were not my People, and her Beloved which was not beloved.* And Chap. i. 10. *It shall come to pass, that in the Place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my People, there shall they be called the Children of the living God.* *Moses* saith, *Deut.* xxxii. 21. *I will provoke you to Jealousy by them that are no People, and by a foolish Nation will I anger you.* *Isaiah* says, Chap. lxxv. 1. *I was found of them that sought me not, I was made manifest to them that asked not after me.* *David* says, according to the LXX Version, *Psal.* xviii. 49. *For this Cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles.* *Moses* saith, *Deut.* xxxii. 43. *Rejoice ye Gentiles with his People.* The *Psalmist* saith again, *Psal.* cxvii. 1. *Praise the Lord all ye Gentiles, and laud him all ye his People.* And again, *Isaiah* saith, Chap. xi. 1, 10. *There shall be a Root of Jesse, and, according to the LXX Version, he that shall rise up to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust.* And who sees not that what has been so long prophesied, has been actually fulfilled in the Conversion of the *Gentile World* to *Christ*? And we in this Age know yet more of the Accomplishment of these Prophecies, there being a Time once when it might be said, that all the *Kingdoms of this World* are become the *Kingdoms of Jesus Christ*. And since *Jesus* expressly foretells, that the *Gospel of his Kingdom* shall be preached in all the *World*, *Matth.* xxiv. 14. and hence that these prophetick Predictions should be fulfilled by the Propagation of his Doctrine, by such unlikely Instruments and Means: Who sees not again, that he was a great Prophet, even that extraordinary one promised by *Moses*; yea here 'tis evidently

dently to be seen what the Apostle saith, *Chap. xv. 8.* that God hath in Christ confirmed the Promises made unto the Fathers.

Paul writes his Epistle to the *Galatians*, and in proving his Divine Mission *Same Year.* and Doctrine, he touches upon these Points. (1.) That he had a quite different Education, and had thereby contracted such Antipathy against Christianity, as to become a violent persecutor of the Church, *Chap. i. Ver. 13.* And Men do never reject the Principles of their Education, confess their Errors, and condemn themselves, unless it be either by some glaring Evidence they cannot resist, or by some secular Interest or corrupt Passion that biases the Judgment, and misleads it; which last Reasons cannot so much as be imagined in this Case.

(2.) That he was an uncommon Proficient in the *Jewish Learning, Verse 14.* And hence as he had been already put in great Trust by the Rulers of the *Jews*, so he was capable of rising to yet greater Honour and Advancement among them. And as Men will not Part with the Principles of their Education, unless a greater Light, or a greater Interest induce them, far less will Men of the highest Esteem, and who can raise their Fortune in the World, wilfully part with their avowed Tenets, yea all their Interests, Honours, and Comforts in this World, yea their very Lives for nothing that can be thought by any Body to Balance any one of these Losses; that is, they will not expose themselves to all Manner of Evils for no Manner of Purpose. This would be inconsistent with the natural Desires of human Nature, and all the Desires of natural Men.

(3.) That had he consulted *Flesh or Blood*, or any Interest that concerned them, he had never embraced Christianity, *Ver. 16.* a Case very plain and demonstrable; for as the Christian Religion strictly enjoins the mortifying of the *Flesh*, denying of Self, and the crucifying the World; and in a Word, the governing our I-magination,

agination, Passions, and sensitive Appetites, and moderating our Satisfaction to the Things of this Life: So 'tis evident in the Apostle's Case, that he quit Honour for Disgrace, Riches for Poverty, Peace and Safety for continual Danger and Death. And how is it possible, that a Man should willingly forgo all the Pleasures and Comforts of this Life, and willingly embrace all that Men count Evil in it, if he had not a better Hope?

(4.) That the ministring of the Spirit, and the working of Miracles are not by the Law, but by Faith in the Gospel, *Chap. iii. Ver. 5. q. d.* They had sensible Demonstrations of the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and the Power of working Miracles by Prophecy, by discerning of Spirits, by divers Kinds of Tongues, and the Gift of healing; and since none of the *Jews*, who adhered still to the *Mosaick* Dispensation, and far less any of the Heathens, did, or could pretend to such supernatural Powers; they are evidently from Faith in Christ.

(5.) That the Justification of the Heathen World by Faith in Christ was included, as being the most eminent Accomplishment of the Promise made to *Abraham*, that in him *all Nations should be blessed*, *Ver. 8.* This appears evidently; for, as has been already observed, no other Land was promised to the blessed Seed but the Land of *Canaan*; and how was it conceivable, that all Nations of the Earth could be blessed in that promised Seed that is expressly confined to the Land of *Canaan*, a very small Spot of Earth? And hence this promise must necessarily be meant of One that was to come from *Abraham's* Loins, and was to be a common Blessing to Mankind; not by obtaining an universal Monarchy over the World; for this not being contained in the Promise, they had no Foundation for making it the Object of their Faith: On the contrary, this is expressly excepted against, since they had no Promise; and therefore no Covenant right to any Land but the Land of *Canaan*:

And

And since 'tis impossible to find out a temporal Happiness, or a temporal Saviour in this Promise, wherein all Nations should be concerned, it can only be meant of a spiritual Salvation and Redeemer, that the *Gentiles* should have Interest in as well as the *Jews*.

(6.) That unless Christ had redeemed us from the Curse, we could not receive the Spirit contained in the Blessing promised to *Abraham*, as above proven, and promised by the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. xliv. Ver. 3. *I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Offspring*, and Chap. xxxii. 15. By *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxxi. Ver. 33. *After those Days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts.* By *Ezekiel*, Chap. xi. Ver. 19. *I will put a new Spirit within you*, and Chap. xxxvi. Ver. 27. By *Joel*, Chap. ii. Ver. 28. *Afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all Flesh:* And by *Zechariah*, Chap. xii. 10. *And I will pour out upon the House of David, and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and Supplication.* And this Promise had never been accomplished, unless Jesus, as the great promised *Messiah*, had taken off the Doom of the violate Law, which was of that terrible Import as to with hold and put a Bar upon all the rich Influences of the Spirit.

Paul, in his Defence against the *Jews*, *Acts Chap. xxii.* mentions these Heads Year 27th
of Argument. (1.) That he had a very after Christ's
liberal Education, Ver. 3. and there- Ascension.
fore, as he could not be easily imposed
upon himself by fabulous Tales, so he was under no
Temptation to push a desperate Fortune. (2.) That
the Prejudices of his Education were so strong, as
to engage him in a violent Persecution of Christians,
Ver. 3, 4. And what should after this engage him to
join Interests with a Sect of Men every where spoken
against, and who expected nothing but the worst
Kind of Usage from the World? (3.) That he was
had

had in great Esteem among all the leading Men among the *Jews*, and in a fair Way of obtaining yet higher Preferment in Church and State, by his Fitness and Readiness to serve them, *Ver. 5.* And who can imagine, if the Apostle had not full Conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, that he would willingly abandon Riches, Grandeur, and Prosperity among the *Jews*, that he might embrace the Cross among the Christians? (4.) That Jesus had revealed his Glory, and called him by a Voice from Heaven, *Ver. 6, 7.* (5.) That these who were with him on the Journey, to assist him in his persecuting Design, and hence, to be sure, had enough of Ill-will against Christianity, yet (if they pleaded) might be called up as Witnesses of this heavenly Vision; that is, these that were Associates with him in Persecution saw an extraordinary Light, and heard a Voice from Heaven, tho' not distinctly and articulately, *Verse 9.* compared with *Chap. ix. Ver. 7.* The Force of the Argument lies here, if all that *Paul* says of this extraordinary Light, and Voice from Heaven was Fiction, he would never have appealed it to his Companions, Enemies to his Cause; that is, if this was not true Fact, or if any in his Company could have denied the same, *Paul* would never go about to discredit the whole Story of his Vision, by tacking to it a Circumstance needlessly, which would easily be disproven. Again, on the other Hand, if none in the Company then with him could deny there was really an extraordinary Light from Heaven, and a Voice also from the same, how unlikely is it, that an extraordinary Meteor in the Heavens should tryft so exactly with a sudden Design in *Paul* to act the Part of a Cheat? But then further, when was there ever seen a Meteor, whose Light was above the Brightness of the Sun? And yet such a Light was that which shone about *Paul*, and them which journeyed with him, *Acts xxvi.* Again, what shall be said of the Voice from Heaven? Or how shall it be accounted for, if there was not a real

real heavenly Vision, which these that were present could attest?

In short, that we may finish the Evidences of Christianity laid before us by *Luke*, in his History of *the Acts of the Apostles*, that there were Numbers both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who embraced the Christian Faith in the Apostle's Days, no Infidel hath yet been so hardy as to deny: That these must have been converted some how or other, and by some Means or other, no Man in his Wits can deny: That *Luke* did write his History of *the Acts of the Apostles* in that very Age they lived, hath not, and cannot be questioned by any; for 'tis evident he finished his History before *Paul's* Martyrdom at *Rome*. It is cited by *Polycarp* (i), who *Irenaeus* tells was not only instructed by the Apostles, and had conversed with many who had seen our Lord, but also was, by the Apostles in *Asia*, ordained Bishop of the Church in *Smyna* (k). And *Irenaeus* himself, who tells he was acquainted with *Polycarp* in his younger Years (l), spends a long Chapter in abridging and reciting all the principal Facts narrated by *Luke* (m). Again, that *Luke* sets down the Times, Places and Circumstances of the Conversion of so many Numbers to Christianity, is manifest to any that read his Book; particularly, that so many were converted at *Jerusalem* in the Time of the great Feast of *Pentecost*, Acts ii. 3. and so many in *Samaria*, Acts viii. and at *Cesarea*, Chap. x. and at *Ephesus*, Chap. xix. all famous and popular Cities: Besides many other remarkable Places narrated in his Book of *the Acts of the Apostles*. Again, that their Conversion was brought about by many Miracles particularly condescended upon, as wrought openly before them; by the Gift of Tongues, whereby *Parthians*, *Medes*, *Elamites*, *Cretes*, *Arabians*, Indwellers in *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, *Phrygia*,

(i) Epist. ad Philip. (k) Iren. adv. Har. Lib. 3. Cap. 3.
(l) Ibid. (m) Iren. adv. Har. Lib. 3. Cap. 12.

gia, Pamphilia, Egypt, Lybia, Cyrene, Rome, heard the Apostles, unlearned Men, (their Adversaries being Witnesses) speak in their own Language *the wonderful Works of God*; by Prophecies from the Old Testament of a Divine Person to come unto this lower World, which could only be fulfilled in Jesus Christ; and by manifold Proofs of Christ's Resurrection from the Dead. This is the Account *Luke* gives us how the Gospel was first propagated. Now had *Luke* told Stories, so circumstantiately narrated of the Time, Place, and Number of Converts, and of the Persons also converted, and this as being affected by Miracles publickly done, by supernatural Gifts publickly manifested, &c. And if nothing of all this truly happened, but all who had embraced Christianity were conscious to themselves they believed by other Means, and without such extraordinary Works wrought before them, how invincibly would they have been prejudiced against Christianity, so as utterly to have renounced the same: Or if all the Inhabitants of these several Places (where *Luke* relates such extraordinary Facts done) had known the contrary, that never such Things were wrought or heard among them, how must this have blasted the Credit of the Christian Religion in its first Bud? Or if an Infidel should make the Supposition, that not *Luke*, *Paul's* Companion, had written that History, but some Person or other in the Beginning of the second Century; for later than this an Infidel cannot bring such a Supposition; since, as it is observed before, *Irenaus* (who might have seen *Papias*, *John's* Disciple, and had seen *Polycarp*, who was conversant with these who had seen the Lord after his Resurrection) hath given us an Abridgment of the said History; how, I pray, would it take, if Christians had been told, they had been converted by Facts and Evidences they knew to be false, and a long Story of Things wonderful in themselves, and of the greatest Concern to them, had been palmed upon them, which

which they were so far from having any Experience of, as that they had not so much as heard of them before? Would not this have been sufficient for them to have rejected such a Religion? A Religion that promised no secular Interest; a Religion they saw attended inevitably with the Cross; when they, according to this absurd Supposition, were made sensible it was supported only with Lies. 'Tis clearly demonstrable then, that such Facts were done, and that *Luke* narrates them as they were; and hereby the Credentials of Christianity will appear Incontestibly to all impartial and candid Enquirers after Truth.

There is an universal Consent in the Ages succeeding to that of the Apostles, that such mighty Works were done. *Quadratus*, in his Apology presented to *Adrian*, a short Fragment whereof we have in *Eusebius*, saith, that the Works of our Saviour were even then conspicuous, some of them whom he had healed, and of these whom he had raised, being then living, and conversant with him and others (n). And *Ignatius*, in his Epistle to *Polycarp*, affirms he had seen our Lord after his Resurrection; which Epistle, being cited by *Jerom*, was long before his Epistles can be supposed to be corrupted. *Celsus*, as appears from *Orogen*, who cites from him to his Face, was not so far gone distracted as to deny the Matters of Fact. Nor were our Saviour's Miracles denied by *Julian*, as appears from *Cyrillus's* Books against his Pagan Mishmash. *Justin Martyr*, in his second Apology, appeals to the Journals of the Empire while *Pilate* was Pretor in *Judea*, to testify that Jesus had not only healed Diseases, but raised some from the Dead. *Tertullian* adds, that an Account of his Ascension was given by *Pilate* to *Tiberius Caesar*. Yea

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Apol.

(n) Or at least that had seen, or might have seen them, as the Words *οὗτοι οἱ τῶν ημετέρων χρόνων τινὲς αὐτῶν ἀπικέλευτο* import.

Apol. Cap. 5. he tells, that *Tiberius* propounded to the Senate to admit *Jesus* among the Number of their Gods, of whom he understood great Miracles were done, from those Commanders under him in *Palestine*. All the old Apologists speak of our Saviour's Miracles as every where acknowledged. *Arnobius* saith, "They could not accuse of Falshood the Records of his wonderful Works." Yea further, we find a miraculous Power still exerted among Christians until at least the Beginning of the fifth Century, and this both in healing Diseases, and e-jecting of Devils, as appears from the Writings of the Fathers: Remarkable Instances we have thereof in *Augustine's* Time, as may be seen in his Book *de civitate Dei*, Lib. 22.

About this Time, I think, *Matthew* wrote his Gospel, for Reasons given *Year 28th* after *Christ's* by the learned Doctor *Mill* in his *Prolegomena* to the *New Testament*: Or *Ascension*. Should we follow *Eusebius's* Authority, who places the Time of *Matthew's* writing his Gospel in the eight or ninth Year after our Lord's Ascension (e); yet still it appears evidently, that the Truth of the Gospel was already demonstrate, by invincible Arguments, before *Matthew* wrote his Gospel, even all the Arguments made use of by the Apostles, from the first to the eleventh Chapter of the *Acts*.

Matthew in writing his Gospel takes Notice, that several Passages from the *Old Testament* were accomplished, or verified in *Jesus Christ*. One illustrious Passage he cites, *Chap. i. Ver. 23.* from *Isa. v.i. 14.* *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call his Name Immanuel.* But then let it be observed, that as the Apostles had already proven, that *Jesus* was a Divine Person, without beginning with this Prophecy about the Manner of his Birth; so 'tis most evident, that *Matthew* never intended this Passage as an Argument, much less the first Argument, whereby

(e) Hist. Eccles. Lib. 3. Cap. 24.

whereby one was to embrace Christianity, but only as a further Confirmation of these Proofs already laid down: For 'tis plain from the Nature of the Thing, this Prophecy could never be applied to Jesus, till first it was proven he was born of a Virgin; and if it is demonstrate he was born of a Virgin, then 'tis also demonstrate he is a Divine and extraordinary Person; and hence that he is the *Messiah*, without such a Prophecy about him. The Case was this, and 'tis very clear, it was made evident to serious and thoughtful Persons, from what is above said, of the Character, Life, Miracles, Doctrine, and Resurrection of Jesus, that he was a Divine Person; and hence he could not come into this World by ordinary Generation; for *what is born of the Flesh is Flesh*: And hence again, that necessarily there must be something very supernatural in his Birth. And again, if any Person, proving himself inspired (as the Apostles did) shall point forth the Manner and Way of his Conception and Birth, viz. that it was by the Power of the Holy Ghost in the Womb of a Virgin, this must determine our Mind about the same; especially if there be an ancient Prophecy in the *Old Testament* of one to be born of a Virgin, who shall be called *Immanuel*; and if this Prophecy holds more properly and literally of Jesus, than it can hold of any other Person; that is, if one that is God, dwelling in our Nature, be more properly *Immanuel*, i. e. *God with us*, than one in whose Time God will favour us; and if one that is really a Virgin, is more properly called a Virgin than a young married Woman (p),

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this

(p) When Trypho. the Jew objects to Justin Martyr, that [*Halmah*] signifies a young Woman, Justin upbraids him for thinking that LXX of their own most learned Doctors should not understand the Meaning thereof as well as he, who render the same *Παρθένος*. Next, he poses him to explain otherwise the Meaning of that Passage, *Who shall declare his Generation?* Isa. liii. and of what is said, *Dan. Chap. ii. of a Stone cut*

this should be sufficient to apply it to Jesus. Again, if it be more worthy of God, when he is about to give some great Sign of some great Purpose to the House of *David*, to express something very extraordinary in a Phrase introduced with so much Solemnity as in the Word *Behold*, than any thing common and ordinary; and if there be no Wonder at all in a young Woman's conceiving, but in a Virgin there is; this also confirms that a supernatural Birth must here be meant. Again, when 'tis said, *The Lord himself shall give you a Sign*, if this intimates more of an immediate Divine Interposition than what is in the ordinary Generation of Mankind, this further confirms our Faith in this Particular; and yet more when 'tis said of the Child born, that his Name shall be called *the wonderful (q) Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*, Titles applicable to no King, or Monarch on Earth.

The next Passage *Matthew* cites, *Chap. ii. Ver. 6.* from *Micah*, *Chap. v. 2.* which Passage by a Figure being affirmative, and yet in the Sense negative, *Matthew* thus renders it, *And thou Bethlehem, in the Land of Judah, art not the least (r) of the Princes of Judah; for out of thee shall come a Governour that shall rule my People Israel: And all that Matthew intends here is to shew, that here is a Prophecy of a Person*

cut out of the Mountain without Hands. And when *Trypho* would apply it to *Hezekiah*, (who, by the Way, was born nine or ten Years before) he demands of him, if it was true, that before *Hezekiah* could know Father or Mother, he destroyed the Power of *Damascus*, and took the Spoil of *Samaria*? Or how it was true of *Hezekiah*, if called the Angel of the great Council? *Iustin. Dial. cum Tryph.*

(q) [*Pete*] signifies either *wonderful* or *hidden*; and 'tis the Name which the Angel takes who foretold the Birth of *Sanctus*, who was a *Nazarite*, *Jud. xiii. 18.*

(r) [*Tzayir*] sometimes signifies *great*, so 'tis rendered, *Dan. viii. 9.* by the *LXX*, and the *Chald. Paraphr.* render it *Sutrans*, *Jer. xlviii.*

Person to come out of *Bethlehem*, that was to rule *Israel*, but with this extraordinary Part in his Character, that though he was to come out of *Bethlehem* after the Time *Micah* prophesied, yet his Outgoings have been of old, even from everlasting; or as the *LXX* have it, *From the Beginning, even from the Days of Eternity*, a Character that could not possibly agree to *David* himself, though his Birth and Succession had followed this Prophecy, much less to any of his Successors in that Kingdom. And as for *Zerubbabel*, his very Name tells us the Place of his Birth. But again, since *Jesus* had made it evident by the most unexceptionable Proofs, that he is a very Divine Person, and since it was known to them all that he was born at *Bethlehem*, they may see this Prophecy fulfilled in him. And when there is a Prophecy beforehand, which can only be fulfilled in *Jesus*, this is the utmost Evidence we can have, he is the Person foretold in the Prophecy (f). This is a Prophecy that may convince the *Jews* that *Jesus* is the Christ; because if not fulfilled in him, and it was not fulfilled in any other, it can never now be fulfilled. And as this was an Argument very proper to be made use of to the *Jews*, who believed the Divine Authority of the *Old Testament*, so it wants not its Use among the *Heathen World*; that is, to say, let them read the History of the several Nations, and the Prophecies anent them recorded in the *Old Testament*, and let them recollect how the Fate of several Nations about did exactly correspond to these Predictions revealed about them, and hereby they must see they prophesied by a true Spirit. And again, if they find an extraordinary Person foretold by the same true Prophets, as they have Reason to expect him, so if none ever answered the Character of that Prophet but *Je-*

(f) *Onkelos* the *Chaldee* Paraphrast refers it also to the *Messiah*, whom some think was one of that great Council held by *Herod*, *Matth*, ii. 4.

fus Christ, they have sufficient Reason to believe that Jesus is he.

As to the other Passages cited by *Matthew*, Chap. ii. 15. and *Ver.* 18. and *Ver.* 23d. from *Hosea* Chap. xi. *Ver.* 1. *Out of Egypt have I called my Son.* And *Jeremiah*, Chap. xxxi. 15. *In Ramah was there a Voice heard, Lamentation, Weeping and great Mourning, Rachel weeping for her Children, and would not be comforted, because they were not;* And from other Prophets, *Verse* 23. that *Christ shall be a Nazarene.* The Meaning is not as if the Evangelist intended, that these Prophecies related peculiarly to Christ, but only that they agree to him, and are verified in him; that is, he was the Son of God in a higher Sense than *Israel* was, and called also out of *Egypt*. Again that *Rachel* being buried in *Bethlehem* *Gen.* xxxv. 19. near to *Ramah*, which belonged to the Tribe of *Benjamin*, when *Herod* destroyed all the Children that were in *Bethlehem*, and in all the Coasts thereof, she may be brought in as weeping upon this mournful Occasion, as well as any other; and the Voice of her weeping may be said to be heard in *Ramah* not far from *Bethlehem* (1). Again, as *Joseph* was the *Nazareus* of his Brethren, *Gen.* xlix. 26. this was also verified in *Jesus*. And since there is an eminent Prophecy of the *Messiah*, *Isaiah*, Chap. ix. 7. which should be rendered thus, 'At the first Time he made vile, or debased the Land of *Zebulon* and *Nephthali* (compared with 2 *Kings* xv. 19.) so in the latter Time he shall make it glorious.' Why?

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(1) 'Tis certain from several Passages in the New Testament, that (11α) is often to be understood but consequentially: Hence there is a Necessity of the Distinction between *ἵνα ἀντιτίθῃται* and *ἵνα ἐκβατῖται*. Again, there is a Difference between *το* (*Calah*) and *το* (*Malch*), and according to the *Hebrew* Idiom, both may be rendered *ἐπληρώθη*, when yet one of them means only an eventual Completion, while the other expresses an intentional Completion also.

The Way of the Sea by Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the People that walked in Darkness have seen a great Light. And if it be asked how? it follows in the 6. Verse. Here then is a Prophecy, that a great Light; the ordinary Title of the *Messiah*, should shine in Galilee; and since *Nazareth* was a City of Galilee, hereby there is a Congruity between this Prediction and the Event of Christ's dwelling at *Nazareth*. In short, some of these Passages mean no more than by such an Event it fell out, that an ancient Prophecy was fulfilled in a more eminent Way than otherwise it could have been. As if I were saying, there are many Infidels and Apostates in our Day, that it may be fulfilled what the Spirit of God saith expressly by the Apostle *Paul*, 1. Tim. iii. 1. *In the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith.*

In fine, as a Person may reason from the Analogy between the several Events of Divine Providence, not as being the first, or main Proof of any Point, but for the further Illustration and Confirmation thereof, after it is already proven; so the Apostle *Paul* having first proven in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, from the Nature of the Thing, that the Law was a Bondage requiring *Circumcision* the *Observation of Months, Days and Years*, he next tells them, Chap. iv. that if they continued in Bondage to that Yoke of the ceremonial Law, after their Liberty was proclaimed, they discovered themselves to be more related in a moral Sense to *Hagar* the bond Woman, than to *Sarah* the free. And it was not enough to say, they had *Abraham* for their Father, since, as in his Family, to whom the Blessing was promised, there was a Child according to ordinary carnal Generation, as well as a Son by God's special Promise; and so also in *Israel's* Family; for the Promise was confined to *Jacob*. Hence by a certain Congruity of the Divine Proceedings, *they are not all Israel that are of Israel*. And the Apostle following the same Kind of Reasoning, from the usual Disposition of Divine Providence, tells,

tells, that *Jerusalem which now is*, by holding to typical Adumbrations, after they are compleated; and the great End of them attained in Christ, *is in Bondage to beggarly Elements*; and hereby shews she is under a Law only of Servitude and Fear, as *Hagar the bond Woman*: And by persecuting such as believe and comply with the great Design of these Shadows, even the great Promise of God made to *Abraham*, they behave like *Ishmael the Son of the bond Woman*, and not like the Sons of the Promise: And if there be such a Covenant-distinction now among these who are naturally descended of the same Stock, so that some of them should have Interest in the Promise, and others have none, 'tis but agreeable to what has long since happened in *Abraham's Family*, the Father and Pattern of the Faithful. This is the whole Account of what the Apostle designs, *viz.* only a Reasoning from the Uniformity of Divine Providence, or from the usual Analogy of the Dispensations of his Grace: And all this only for Illustration, after the Point in Hand is already demonstrate. Hence it was customary to all the Eastern Nations to express themselves in parabolical Similitudes, not to prove, but to set home any Instruction in a more lively Manner, as founded upon some Analogy in Nature.

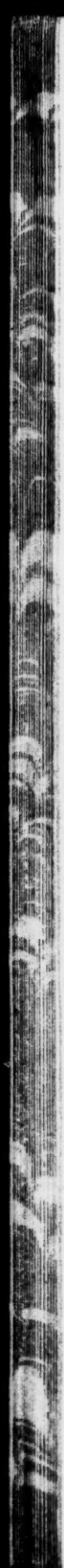
The like may be said of all the other Instances mentioned by that Author. We have already shewed where the Stress of the Apostle's Proofs lies, and if, after the Apostles have demonstrate the Truth of Christianity; and if, after they have argued in several Particulars from the Nature of the Things, they also observe, that the Course of God's Government is uniform; and hence what happened of old are *Examples to us*, and that there is an Analogy between Events and Events, Types and Antitypes, the Shadows of Things to come and the Things themselves, the Shadows of Things in the Heavens and the heavenly Things themselves, 'tis evident, that as this is a so-

lid Way of arguing in itself, so it was necessary to the Jews.

Thus I have essayed to set the Apostles Arguments in as clear a Light, and as shortly as I can, whereby it evidently appears, that Christianity did not first gain upon the World, by taking any Advantage of a superstitious Fear, or any *Enthusiastick* Ardor of Mind, or the Simplicity of a few unlearned credulous People: Nor was its Propagation owing to Force, nor to any particular Tryst of Events, peculiar to that Time and Age of the World, (as happened in the spreading of *Mahomet's* (u) Delusion) and then learned Men were to rack their Invention to find out Arguments in the Defence thereof: No, it was quite otherwise here; the Arguments for the Proof of Christianity did lead the Van, and made Way for its Progress: Arguments whereby a few illiterate People were able to out-face and confound the most learned and polite among Mankind: Arguments that did shine with such Demonstration, and irresistible Evidence, that if it is but owned as possible, that God can reveal his Mind to the World, and that he can give for once such strong and convincing Evidences of the Truth of his Revelation, as is sufficient to attest the same, both to that and the following Ages, I think it scarce possible that higher Evidences can be given than what we have of the Truth of the Gospel.

And here I might pose all Infidels so much as to invent a Way more demonstrative of any revealed Religion, than what is laid before us of the Truth of Christianity; much more to shew a Way how a revealed Religion can be possibly proven to be so, if the Proofs of the Christian Religion should be exploded as insufficient. And if they are not satisfied with the Reasons and Grounds of the Christian Religion, and yet cannot so much as imagine better Grounds for any Religion supposed to be revealed of God, it will be easy to find other Causes of Infidelity than Ignorance and Thoughtlessness.

(u) *Vide Prideaux* on the Life of *Mahomet*.



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DISCOURSE,

Wherein such PRINCIPLES are established as lay the Foundation of Mr. Tindal's Book, entituled *Christianity as old as the Creation*; and also of the Letter in his Defence.

TITUS i. 9.

Holding fast the faithful Word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince Gainsayers.

WHAT Nehemiah says of the Builders of Jerusalem, that with one Hand they wrought in the Building, and in the other Hand they held a defensive Weapon, may well be applied to Ministers of the Gospel; especially in this Age. We are at once to build up Christ's Church and People in Faith and Holiness unto eternal Life, and lay out ourselves for the Defence of the Gospel.

Hence the Apostle having laid down the Character of one that has the Oversight of God's Flock, that he must be blameless, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker, not given to filthy Lucre, but a Lover of Hospitality, a Lover of good Men, sober, just, holy, temperate: He adds also, he must hold fast the faithful Word, as he hath been taught, &c.

In the Original it is thus, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὅτι κατὰ τὴν διδασκίαν τοῦ λόγου. Ἀντεχω strictly signifies *contra teneo*,

teneo, and should we consult no Versions, the Words at the first Glance, with an usual Ellipsis, will naturally cast up such a Gloss as this, holding, in Opposition to Gainfayers, such Tenets or Principles, as are conform to the Doctrine of that Word which is most surely believed, or which has the highest Notes or Characters of Credibility in it. And hereby the Apostle seems to set before us the very Method whereby Ministers are to deal with the Adversaries of our holy Religion, in order to convince or confute them. They lay down Principles that undermine the Gospel; but we are to hold Principles in Opposition to theirs, that are conform to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and confirm the same. But whether this Version of the Words be allowed or not, 'tis certain there can be no *holding fast the faithful Word*, without establishing these Principles which it presupposes, and by which it is supported. And this being our Design at this Time, through the divine Assistance,

We shall I. Shew what Principles we hold in Opposition to Infidels. II. Conclude with a short Improvement suitable to the present Occasion.

And here if we shall enter upon some Things that perhapes may not be obvious to every Capacity in this Audience, or if we shall happen to exceed your usual Time in pleading the Cause of our Lord and Saviour against his avowed Enemies, we hope to be excused for this once. There are many fitter for this Undertaking, but none are more obliged; I should be behind none in good Will to such a Cause.

The *first* Point is to shew, what Principles we hold in Opposition to Infidels: and these we shall lay before you in so many Propositions, as being the nearest Way we can think on of reaching our Purpose.

P R O P.

P R O P. I.

Man's chief End is not that by social Virtues he may be serviceable to his Neighbours, but that he should glorify God and enjoy him.

IT is so far from being true, that the End of Man's Make, or of his Religion, was chiefly that he should intend the Good of his fellow Creatures; that, on the contrary, I think it simply impossible that such a Constitution could ever be made about Man, view him in what Capacity you will, whether as a rational, or as dutiful, or as a happy Creature.

First, View him as a rational Creature; If he have his Wits about him, should he not consider what is his best Good, whether Matter or Spirit; and among Spirits, whether necessitous and dependent Spirits, like his own, or the God and Father of Spirits? Where would be Man's Reason, if he thought not God the best Good; or if thinking he is, he should not intend him above all Things?

Again, Consider him as upright and dutiful. No other End could be finally proposed to him or by him, than the Glory of God and Enjoyment of him. Had a divine Law been given to Man, Go and make it your chief End to do Good, and receive Good from your fellow Creatures, without intending God, or placing thy supreme Satisfaction in him, tho' he is infinitely amiable in himself, and the Source of all Being and Bliss, 'tis evident this would have been inconsistent with the very Rectitude of our Nature; which Rectitude essentially includes in it, that we conduct ourselves suitably to the several Relations we stand in; and to whom are we more related than to God?

Further, View him as happy. Happiness he could never attain without aiming at the Glory and Enjoyment of God as his chief End. I must take it here for granted, that we are indigent and dependent

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Creatures: I must take it again for granted, that God is conversible with Man; the plain Meaning of which is, that we do not want a God to be the Object of Adoration: I'll take it also for granted, that God is the chief Good, and that there is an immense and overflowing Fulness in him, which all Creatures share of, according to their several Capacities: I'll take it further for granted, that as he hath placed a Spirit in Man, so also by his Inspiration hath given him an Understanding capable of minding his Original, and of turning himself to him, and conversing with him, and which when it doth, he is affected with a Pleasure that transcends every other Delight. These Points I take for granted, partly because I presume 'tis needless to stay on the Proof of them, and partly because, did I stay, I would seek no other *Postulata* for the Proof, but that God is, and that there is a rational Spirit in Man: What then? Shall it be granted, that God is the chief Good, that he is the most delectable Object, and that Man is capable of the Fruition of God, or of perceiving the transcendent Delights that are in him; and yet shall another Thing be proposed to Man as his chief Aim? Then he was to meet with Enjoyments more satisfying than the principal End of his Being; that is, in a Word, he was to please one Thing most, while yet he behov'd to design another Thing more. A very Contradiction! an utter Impossibility! Or if such a Thing was possible, it would be a Hell instead of a Happiness to the Soul.

'Tis true, we cannot profit God by any Acts of Homage done to him, but yet we profit ourselves, and we can neither be good or happy without it. And should we suppose that God takes any Pleasure in the Happiness of his Creatures, or that he makes any Account of the Glory of his overflowing Fulness; or if we think not he is an indolent Being, or indifferent as to Good or Evil; or, in a Word, unless we make an *Epicurean* God of him, or strip him of his
moral

moral Character, the glorifying and enjoying of God must be his End in all the Duties he requires of us; and unless we can find a higher and better End, or unless we are resolved that our Designs should interfere with God's, or have a Mind to forfeit his Favour and our own Happiness, this must be our End also. Who can imagine that our Creator would place his rational Creatures in such an unnatural Posture, that because God is not indigent, therefore we may not glory in him, and give him the Glory of his immense and overflowing Fulness of Perfection; and in Conformity to this, finally acquiesce in him as our most perfect Happiness?

I am so far from thinking the Argument just, that because God is not an indigent Being, he cannot design himself in any Action he requires of us, that on the contrary, I think the Reverse is manifestly true, because he is not indigent, and because he is self-sufficient and all-sufficient, he cannot but design himself; and if he wills either our Rectitude or Happiness, he cannot but require that we should design him too; that is to say, he is the best of Beings, and he cannot but think so, that is, think best of himself; and if he designs that we should judge according to Truth, or according to the Nature, or the moral eternal Fitness of Things; in a Word, if he designs either our Rectitude or Happiness, a main Part of which lies in esteeming and affecting every Thing according to its real Worth, and according to its proper rational Excellency, he cannot but require that we should think so too, that is think best of him, and delight most in him. So that if God is either pleased with himself, or pleased with us, he cannot but intend himself, and require us to intend him too.

'Tis strange that it should be conceivable enough, that God should design and take Pleasure in the Happiness of his Creatures, and yet at the same Time be thought unfit to say he designs his own Glory; as if it was easier to conceive an Accession of Pleasure in

the divine Mind, infinitely happy in itself, than an Accession of Glory; tho' when then the Thing is justly explained, there is no Addition to the one or the other. 'Tis the Egress of the divine Perfections that God intends, and 'tis his own essential Glory his Pleasure terminates upon.

PROP II.

Man is not now in such a State as when he came first from the Hands of his Creator, but is in a lapsed degenerate Condition.

THIS is sadly and fatally evident. He is a Stranger to his own Heart, as well as to any Observation of Mankind, who finds not that the natural Posture of Man's Soul is to be a *Lover of Pleasures more than of God*. And as this is a very horrible Perversion of Soul, whereby all Things are turned upside down in it, the Creature being lifted up to the Room of the Creator, and the Creator degraded below the Rank of Creatures; so 'tis an infinitely vile Affront to the living God, while any Thing, every Thing, the least Thing, yea the worst Thing in the World is preferred to God. O wretched, miserable Mortals!

And who that knows any Thing of God, can ever believe, that a rational Creature in his first Make, should be formed with such a Perverseness as this? Wherefore would the all-wise and all-sufficient God make Man with a natural Aversion to his Original, and a natural Aversion to his own Happiness, which consists in the Soul's Conformity to God, and supreme Complacency in him? To which of God's Attributes could such a Scheme of Things be reconciled? The Glory of none of them could be seen in such a Conduct as this.

Shall

Shall Man be made not only a Fugitive from God, but an Alien to himself? That is, has Man a Soul given him as his better Part, and from which he is denominate a *Man*, for no greater Purpose than to be an Underling to his Body, and a Slave to its overmastering Appetites? Is there no Sin, no Evil in all this? Nor any Disturbance of the divine Subordination of Powers and Beings? Or if there be, can Sin and Evil be any of God's Creatures? Who that believes any thing of God can believe this?

Or if an Infidel should allege, that Man is made for no higher Purpose than what concerns the animal Life, and the pleasing of its Passions and Appetites, I shall only ask, if all Men are to indulge and satisfy all their Passions and Appetites, or only one, or a few of them? If a Man is made to gratify all and every one of them, how is this possible, when they are not only different, but indefinitely jarring and inconsistent with one another? To say he is made for this End, is to say he is made for no determinate, or no practicable End, or rather for no End at all! Shall divine Wisdom be thought to have contrived him after this Fashion? Or if it be said, that different Men are made, each of them to be governed by his different Lusts and Passions, and so made only for such Ends as they pursue; that is, one is made to cheat his Neighbour, another to blaspheme the Name of God; this to gather an Estate by Usury and Avarice; that to spend it with Riot and Luxury: Could Man from the Beginning be fashioned after this Manner by the Finger of God? Who can believe this that believes there is a God? Good God! who can imagine that Evil can be in Thee? or come from Thee? Can Evil be created by infinite Goodness? Can such an Effect as Evil result from a Cause necessarily and infinitely good?

If Man was not guilty, or if he had not participated of some Sin, whereby he hath forfeited Grace, and all Right to the divine Favour, how is it possible he could be in such Circumstances as he finds himself in

at present? When all other Creatures in this lower World are made with a natural Instinct and Inclination to their Happiness, shall Man come originally out of God's Hands with an Aversion to his and to his Original also? And when all other Creatures have sufficient Means for the attaining of all that's good for them, shall Man, the noblest Tribe of them, be destitute of Means sufficient for his, yea want a very Heart to it? 'Tis evident that nothing of all this could possibly have happened, if Man by some Sin or other had not incurred a Forfeiture.

P R O P. III.

God is not obliged to to afford all Men, in this their lapsed State, sufficient Means of Happiness.

IF Man by falling from God has lost all Right and natural Possibility to Happiness, what Right can he have to the Means thereof? Hath he Reason to quarrel with God, if he hath not Means of Happiness, who hath forfeited Happiness itself? He who by none of his Attributes was obliged to give Happiness to any rebellious guilty Sinner, how was he obliged to afford it to all? Hence 'tis evident, that God was at Liberty both as to the Persons, to whom he designed his Grace, and the several Modes, and Measures, and Ways of revealing and communicating the same.

After all, we have Reason to think, that all Men have had the Offer of Means sufficient for their Salvation. None of *Adam's* Family could be ignorant of the Promise, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent. In *Noah's* House again, all Mankind were included, and had an Opportunity of knowing all that was ever before revealed. And none among the *Gentiles* were debarr'd from embracing the *Jewish* Religion that would. Again, Jesus Christ our Saviour gave Commission to his Apostles, (which they

they faithfully executed) *Go and disciple all Nations*, Matth. xxviii. 19. and *preach the Gospel to every Creature*, Mark xvi. 15. And if these who have the Means offered unto them, shall reject them, is the Providence of God to be arraigned for this Perverseness of Men? Or is God bound to make a particular Revelation to every Man, because they will not stand to what he has already made?

Yea, I think it may be alleged, that all Mankind have even at this Day an Offer of Means sufficient to make them happy, if they would embrace the same. In short, they have some such Means as we in this Island, and some other Nations had, of coming first to the Knowledge of the Christian Religion, and again to the Reformation thereof; that is, by Trading, Commerce, Missionaries, Books, Converse of Christians, &c. And who is to be found Fault with, God or Man, if they stop their Ears, against the Report of the Gospel?

P R O P. IV.

God is not any one Attribute singly considered.

TIS the maiming of God, or an aiming to pluck off some of his essential Perfections, that is the Cause of the perpetual Anxiety of the Superstitious, the wild Perturbation of the *Enthusiast*, and the fanciful Conceits of the *Deist*. If God were seen to be all Justice, scattering nothing but Death and Destruction about him, how dreadful were the Sight? and how would all Veneration of him sink into sullen Despair! On the other Hand, were he considered as Goodness alone, without Wisdom to conduct his Measures, or Holiness and Justice to ride the Marches between Good and Evil, then the Fear of God would be totally extinguished, Subjection unto him lost, and

no

no other Respect would be paid him, than what was long since paid to *Alma Terra*.

Particularly 'tis not Goodness alone that is the sole Measure of the divine Conduct, with respect to every one of his Creatures; for if so, then every Creature would, in every Instant of Time, be as good and as happy as God could make him: And the Power of God being always Almighty, no Creature could want any Measure or Degree of Happiness in any Moment of Time, which infinite Power could effect. And why not then, has he not made every Man an Angel, and every Worm a Man, yea every Worm also an Angel?

I know not what can be said to all this, without taking a fuller View of the divine Conduct, and without entertaining such honourable Sentiments of God as are congruous to the Discoveries he makes of himself both in his Word and Works, viz. that as God is infinitely good, so he is also absolutely sovereign, and infinitely wise; and as by an infinite Variety of Beings he displays the Fulness of his Deity, so his Power and his Wisdom are to be seen in the meanest Insect, as well as in the highest Angel. And particularly having made Man a free moral Agent, he does not necessitate or co-act him to be happy or good, but so conducts him according to the Rules of moral Government, as that it shall be by his own free rational Choice that he is so. And what's the plain Sense of this, but that in the divine Nature *Justice and Mercy meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other.*

Yea further, Goodness itself is but a relative Thing, it must have a Respect to something wherewith we are made good; and what shall that be in a rational Creature, but Subjection to the Sovereignty of God, and a Likeness to his moral Excellencies? Any Notion of Goodness, not including this, is an horrid, irreligious Notion of Goodness.

P R O P.

P R O P. V.

Religion consists not solely in the Imitation of God's moral Excellencies.

THO' there is nothing first and last in the Nature of God, yet there are these called his essential Perfections, I mean his Self-existency, Independency and Supremacy, that in the Sense of Mankind are considered as, in Order of Nature, before his moral Excellencies; by this sure Token that the last are usually proven from the first: And if so, then our Religion hath first a Respect to that which is first considered as essentially belonging to God, I mean his Independency and Supremacy; and any Attempt to a proper Imitation of these by the Creature being bold Impiety, and the Source of all Wickedness, there is no Way whereby the Creature can have any Correspondency to them, but by humble Dependence on God, and stated Subjection to his Will. And hence it is, that Dependence on God, and humble Subjection to him, are the two cardinal or fundamental Points of all true Religion, without which it would be impossible to imitate any of his moral Excellencies; or rather any affected Imitation of them without this, instead of being a Virtue, would be the greatest Wickedness.

For Instance, should rational Creatures set up for imitating God's moral Excellencies, without this Dependence and Subjection, or without an Impression in them corresponding to the Divine Independency and Sovereignty; this would be the attempting to be so many Gods, and not petty Gods either, but even to be supreme ones; that is, to know and own no Superior more than the God of Heaven and Earth.

Besides, as God loves himself for his own Sake, or for the Sake of his own infinite Excellencies, (the very Felicity of the Divine Nature) so the noblest Imitation

ration of God is to think as he thinks; that is, to think best of God, and affect him for his own Sake also.

PROP. VI.

Sin is displeasing to God.

IF God takes Pleasure in his own Excellencies, or takes Pleasure in himself, will he not also take Pleasure in every one that conforms himself to him? And will not this import, that he is not so pleased with those who do the contrary?

No Sin of ours can hinder the Divine Complacency in himself; but yet 'tis a Contrariety to his Nature, an Affront to his Authority, a Dishonour to his Government, and an Injury to his Majesty; and can nothing of all this be displeasing to him?

Whether it be said, that the Glory of God, or the Happiness of his Creatures is God's End, 'tis evident he must take Pleasure in his own Design. We cannot conceive how he can intend any End that does not please him; and hence he must be displeased with those who would thwart the same.

If *Deists* will allow, that Virtue and Goodness have any Interest in our Happiness, they must necessarily confess, that Vice is contrary to the same; and if they own, that God has any Design to make his Creatures happy, (as they seem to do) they must again confess, that Sin and Vice do thwart this Design; and hence must be displeasing to God: For should they say, that God takes no Complacency either in his own Glory, or in his Creatures Happiness; this would be to say, that Virtue and Vice, or the Happiness and Misery of his Creatures, are all one Thing to him; or rather 'tis to say, that he is altogether an undesigning Mind, and has not the Reins of Government in his Hand.

Again,

Again, what Need would there be for Repentance, or Hatred of Sin, or Self loathing because of Sin, if it were no Offence unto God, or did not displease him?

Further, To suppose that God forbids a Thing, when his Nature and Will has no Aversion to the Disobedience, is to suppose him an arbitrary Being in the highest, and, I may say, in the only indefensible Notion of it: And if there be an Aversion in the Divine Nature and Divine Will to Sin, this is the proper Notion of Hatred.

Yea further, if God forbid not Sin, as contrary to his Nature, how could he forbid it as contrary to our Happiness? For if our Happiness is in God, and in Intercourse with him, what shall hinder us to be happy in him, if we do nothing contrary to his Nature and Perfections, or nothing that displeases him?

But let us mind that Anger and Displeasure are not the same Thing in God and in us; in us they do disturb the Quiet of our Souls, but in God they are the Aversion of his most serene and perfect Mind; which Aversion is so far from disquieting the Complacency of his Mind, that 'tis equally pleasing to him as his Love to Holiness, both being equally Acts of Love to himself, or the Egress of the same Perfections in his Nature.

P R O P. VII.

Sin deserves eternal Punishment.

I Think there is little Difficulty in conceiving, that God by his mere Sovereignty may unmake again what he has already made. It was by his arbitrary *Fiat* we were first made, and he may, if he pleases, reduce us again to our first Nothing; for how could we, who never had a Right to Being, complain of this as a Wrong? But then I add, much more may he,

he, by an Act of Justice, annihilate an Offender; this is but saying, that the Creature that has not answered the End of his Being, has forfeited all Right to the same. But I further subsume, if God can eternally annihilate even an innocent Being, he may do more eternally to the Guilty; that is, he may make them be eternally more miserable than eternally not to be at all.

And again I further add, that the Nature of God not only admits of this, but requires it; that is, the essential Rectitude of his Nature inclines him to join Good with Good, and Evil with Evil; that Effects shall correspond to their Causes; that good Causes shall have good, and bad Causes bad Effects; particularly that he who is guilty of an infinite Evil, shall suffer infinite Evil, and he that refuses an infinite and eternal Good, shall suffer eternally by that Refusal; or, in other Words, that he cannot be eternally happy who refuses to be so.

He that wonders how the Goodness of God admits that eternal Punishments should be inflicted on the Wicked, never considers, that the Goodness is infinite which they have despised, and that an eternal Good cannot be rejected without being lost, and cannot be lost without an eternal Evil.

Further, the End of God's Government in the World (supposing, but not granting that it is not chiefly for a glorious Display of the Divine Perfections, but solely for the Good of the Creature) necessarily requires the Inflictions of such Punishments: For if the Threatenings of eternal Punishments be hardly sufficient to restrain Men from Vice, far less can Threatenings that are infinitely short of these. And if such Threatenings are necessary for the Ends of Government, it is necessary also for the same Ends they should be execute; unless one should make a Supposition as wicked as it is absurd, *viz.* that the Divine Government is so weak as to need pious

Frauds,

Frauds, false Motives, and panick Frights to compass its Design.

There is a Sort of little Beings, who forgetting themselves, as well as their Original, take it on them to dispute Rights with their Maker: But let the Case be clearly stated between God and his Creatures, let it be searched into the Bottom, and I know of no Rights at all that Man has to speak of, when considered with Respect to his Creator; at least none but what is by a free and positive Grant, which he can never plead for as a Right, whatever Acknowledgments he ought to make thereof as a Favour. What Creature can be named that ever had so much as a Right to Being itself? Can what was not have a Right to be any Thing? And if no Creature has a Right to simple Being, and if this is wholly owing to the free, undeserved, and disinterested Goodness of God, what Right can any of them have to any Blessing or Comfort that is better than simple Being? And if any rational Creature has offended God, the Author of his Being, so much as in one Instance, then 'tis evident, if God has any Right, or if it is possible for him to punish a rebellious Creature, it must be (according to the strict and proper Notion of Punishment) by placing him in such a State as is worse than simply not to be; because, as is already observed, simple Being, and therefore any State of Life that is not worse than simple Being, must, when Things are set in a true Light, be put wholly upon the Score of Goodness and Bounty: So that let a Man's Circumstances be what they will, how afflictive soever they are supposed, yet still, if he is in a more chuseable Condition than in not being at all, all is owing to free Favour, which he has no Manner of Right unto, especially in his lapsed Condition. And who sees not from all this, that not only the Sovereignty of God, but also his Justice, yea also his very Goodness, may exert themselves in innumerable Varieties towards his Creatures, and also in infinitely different Degrees, either of Misery or Happiness.

pinels to them in the other World, according to their Condition and Behaviour in this.

PROP. VIII.

Punishment is not always inflicted for the Good of the Party punished.

THAT Punishment is always inflicted for the Good of the Sufferer is a new Notion, now taken up to serve an Infidel Design, which yet obtains not either in God's Law or in Man's.

By human Laws the Magistrate Punishes a Criminal with Death, can this be for the Good of the Person punished? Who of the surviving Society can think so? The Civil Magistrate hath nothing to do with any Man's eternal State; the Punishment he inflicts relates to his Interest here; and who can imagine, that 'tis for the Good of a Member of Society, to be deprived for ever of all the Good he can have in that Society? Or that 'tis for the Good of Man's Life, to be for ever totally deprived of the same?

And as little doth such a Notion of Punishment obtain in the Laws of God: If the Law of Nature be any of God's Laws, by this very Law a Delinquent may be cut off in his very Crime. And is it not evident, that this must affect a Man's State and Happiness, both in this World and the next?

I add further, 'tis not simply the Good or the Amendment of the surviving Society that's the End of Punishment. If there be any Punishment in the other World, and who, that believes any Thing of God, or of his Providence, can doubt but that *it shall be ill with the Wicked* some Time or other? I say then, if there be any Punishment in a future State, that must have some further respect than simply the reclaiming of the surviving Society. The whole Business is transacted

ed here on Earth, on which our final State depends, and a Punishment appears to be a very improper Mean to reform a Society, which is neither inflicted on Men while they are Members of that Society, nor has any Hand in removing them out of it; Death (I mean a natural Death) being now the common Debt of Nature. How is it possible, that that which is not in this Life, but is only to take Place when Men are done with living, should be intended for the Amendment of a Life not yet finished, much less of a Life that is wholly transacted and past? Hence the principal End of these Punishments cannot be the reclaiming of a Society either in this or in the next World.

'Tis evident then, that Divine Punishments in the other World must have an higher End than any yet mentioned; they declare the Righteousness of God; they are for the Ostentation of his Justice; they vindicate the Honour and Rights of his Government; they make Retribution according to every Man's Work, as being what Justice doth not only admit but exact.

PROP. IX.

No natural Notion of the Divine Goodness can satisfy the guilty Sinner, tho' he should repent, that he shall assuredly be pardoned, without a Revelation.

THE Deist, if he is thoughtful and considerate, cannot but find his Mind racked with perpetual Anxiety, not knowing how to come to any Certainty of Pardon, tho' he should repent from any Notion of the Divine Goodness in general; for whatever Way he conceive of this Goodness, whether a *priori* or *posteriori*, as they speak, he cannot be able to ensure his Happiness.

If upon a general Consideration of the Divine Goodness *a priori*, he should think to form his Hope, that

God will pardon the Penitent, and relieve the Distressed; why but, when he further recollects himself about this Matter, will it not, may he say, follow as naturally from this Notion of Goodness, that no Creature should sin at all, or be in Misery at all, if it was in God's Power to prevent the same? At best it seems but a secondary Instance of Goodness to pardon and to relieve from Misery; 'tis better not to suffer them to sin at all, or be in Misery of any Kind.

And the more the Deist thinks upon this Point, the more will his Reason entangle him, if without the Benefit of Revelation; for the Balance will so turn on the other Side, as to pass all reckoning. There may be weighty Considerations, for any Thing he knows, from the Holiness and Justice of God, at least to put him in Doubt, whether ever God will again accept an Offender: But in preserving the Creature in an innocent State, or preventing his Misery, there could be no Restraint on the Divine Goodness, by any Claim or Demand the Holiness or Justice of God could make.

Thus you see how soon Man's Reason would be bewildered here, without a Revelation to help it out, or without such a Notion of God and his Government, as he has discovered in his Word, whereby we see him to be infinite in Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, Truth, &c.

And as to any Arguments taken from the Goodness of God *a posteriori*, how shall he draw his Conclusion from them? What can he observe in the Management of Divine Providence, without a Revelation to assure him of the Pardon of Sin, tho' he did repent? There is nothing to be seen in the Divine Conduct, either in this World or in the next, to enable the Deist to ground his Hope. As to the Affairs of the other World, they are quite out of Sight; and hence he can make no Conclusion from them. And as to the Affairs of this, the Dispensations of Divine Providence appear so promiscuous, that was it not revealed,

vealed, it would be found certain by Observation, that all Things fall alike to all, and Love and Hatred cannot be known by any Thing that is seen.

But what will yet more jumble, yea utterly confound the Hope of the *Deist*, before he can come to any Certainty as to Pardon, he must prove, that a perfect Repentance can atone for all bypast Transgressions. Again, tho' he should prove this, which yet he will find too hard a Task, since it can be proven by Reason itself, that God is more dishonoured by our Sin than he can be honoured by our After-obedience: For if Sin be a dishonouring of God, 'tis infinitely so, because 'tis a Dissatisfaction with these essential Perfections of his, which are infinite; whereas our Obedience, tho' it be a honouring of God, yet is not infinitely so, because it falls infinitely short of expressing his infinite Excellencies. But suppose him to prove this, he is never a Whit nearer his Hope, this not being Man's Case. He must prove again, that an imperfect Repentance can make amends for all Sins, or that such a Repentance as Men are capable of here, (which is never in such a Measure and Degree as that he sins no more, Sin cleaving to the best) can atone for all Offences. But supposing him to prove even this Point, a Point so glaring with Contradiction, as that an imperfect Repentance should perfectly reconcile us to God, and tho' Men are daily offending God, yet they acquire a Right to his Favour: But suppose he did, he cannot yet reach his Purpose; he must prove again, that he has attained such a Measure of Repentance as will be acceptable to God; he must prove this, tho' he has no Rules to prove it by; and hence no Means of knowing what Measure of Repentance will be sufficient, and whether he has attained the same.

I suppose you will see the Propositions are so laid down, as to cast Light on one another: Hence follows

PROP. X.

A Mediator is necessary, in order to the Restoration of the offending Creature unto the Favour of God.

IF God be infinitely holy, and if Sin be infinitely contrary to his Nature, he could not but establish a Law that forbids Sin; and if he regard himself, or his own Glory, he could not but punish it, otherwise he would neither truly act, nor truly represent his Nature to us. God owes this Right of punishing primarily to himself; his Holiness could not bear that impure Worms should come into his sacred Presence; his Justice could not admit, that Indignities done against him should go without Animadversion: His Majesty could not yield to be trampled upon by vile contemptible Worms, without some notable Vindication. There is none of his Attributes he can deny.

Again, As for his own Sake, he cannot wholly dispense with the Punishment of Sin, so neither could he wholly dispense with the same for our Sake, and for the Sake of the loyal Spirits above. Should any of his Creatures find, that he made but little Account of his Majesty, Holiness and Justice, what Kind of Thoughts would they have of God? What Sort of Deity would he appear to them? How mis-shapen an Idea would they entertain of the glorious God! And how little could such an Apprehension of him contribute either to their Duty or Delight?

O! how weighty are the Reasons of the Incarnation and Sufferings of the Son of God? The more Acquaintance that rational Creatures have with God, and the more there is understood of the Nature and Perfections of God, the more Revenue of Glory ye are sure will redound unto God, and the greater Happiness will then accrue to Man; to Man did I say? Nay to all the Angels and Seraphims in Heaven. And 'tis by the Son of God, his assuming our Nature, substituting himself

himself in our Room, and satisfying the Demands of Justice in our Stead, that the Holiness of God, and his Hatred against Sin, shine more in its Lustre, than it could have done in the very Non-existence of Sin, God's Hatred of Sin being carried as high as his Love to his only begotten Son. And the inflexible Justice of God, which is the very Fence of his Holiness, is more notably displayed than when thousands are hurled into Hell. Again, there is no other possible Instance of Goodness, but that of God's sending his Son to save us; of which it can be said, This is Love to the uttermost! This is as far as infinite Love itself can go. o

And how vain are Infidels to impugn the Doctrine of Christ's Incarnation, upon an absurd Supposition of the Conversion of one Nature into another? Who dreams of this? And no less absurd is it in them, to infer a Conceit of the Deity becoming visible, because Jesus Christ is visible. One may with a like Reason argue, if Man is visible, his immortal Spirit is visible also.

Again, Tho' we cannot have an adequate Idea of the Divine Immensity, more than of any other Divine Perfection, yet we may warrantably say, that God is most present where there is most of the Divine Energy: As for Instance, we must necessarily own there is more of Divine Power, and consequently more of God, in raising one from the Dead, than in suffering him to lie still; and the like we may say of his Goodness, and of every other Perfection. And by such Steps we may be led, if our Capacity could admit of it, to see how God, in a most transcendent Manner, may be said to be in Christ; and how the Presence and Influence of the Deity, which is every where, may yet reside personally in the human Nature of our Lord and Saviour.

Nor can they prove, that Equality and Mediation are inconsistent. Human Powers mediating with others not superior to them, may be sufficient to confute

ture such a groundless Allegation. And forasmuch as this Point, tho' it cannot be disproven by Reason, yet is so much ridiculed by some prophane Wits, I would here pose them, even upon the absurd Supposition of two independent Gods, how they could prove, that it were simply impossible, that one of them should come, with the Consent of the other, upon some great Undertaking, as was at once for the Glory of both, and at the same Time absolutely necessary for the Salvation of some Creatures, and conducive to the greater Happiness of all the most loyal Part of them; much less, when tho' they are two Persons, yet they have an eternal necessary *Nexus* in the same Deity, and a different order of subsisting in the same.

PROP. XI.

Justice and Mercy in God are very consistent.

THO' punishing and pardoning are not strictly Justice and Mercy, yet they flow as necessarily from these Attributes, as great Contrivances flow from Wisdom, and great Productions from Power. And tho' Divine Wisdom may regulate in the Manner and Circumstances of Punishment, as well as in the Productions of Power, yet it can never lay down such a Law or Constitution, as that Sin should not deserve Punishment; for if so, God would connect Things in their Nature repugnant; that is, he would join together Good and Evil, Wickedness and Happiness, or rather Misery and Happiness. But then to shew that Mercy and Justice can well consist together, yea in the very same Act; I add, there is Mercy as well as Justice in this Constitution. 'Tis Mercy as well as Justice that states the eternal Differences, and rides the Marches between Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, and

and between the natural Appendages of both. And it would be as inconsistent with Mercy as with Justice, to allow that the Unholy should be as happy as the Holy; or, which is the same, that the Good and Well-disposed should enjoy no greater Happiness, than what the perverse Tempers of the Vicious render them capable of.

But O! how gloriously do Mercy and Justice shine at once in the Incarnation and Sufferings of the Son of God? Here, as in one Constellation, Justice is satisfied, Holiness is glorified, and Goodness triumphs, to their mutual and eternal Glory; the eternal Differences between Good and Evil are here maintained; the Points of Morality are effectually established, so as neither Men nor Devils can have any Reason to impeach the Divine Conduct, as if he confounded all these Things upon the mere Accounts of Sovereignty.

PROP. XII.

The Light or Law of Nature, is not sufficient to conduct us to Happiness.

THIS being, in a good Measure, proven by what is already laid down, we need not insist much upon it: Only we cannot but take Notice, that never did a Set of Men more manifestly blunder than Infidels do in this Part of the Controversy. The Law of Nature, say they, is an internal Law written in the Mind, and absolutely perfect: But how a Law written in the Mind can be more perfect than the Mind itself, or how a subjective Light is more perfect than the Knowledge thereof, when Knowledge and subjective Light are the same, will not be easy to conceive. An external Law may be perfect, whether we be so or not; but how a Law that cannot be abstracted from Individuals, can be more perfect than these

these Individuals are ; or how a Law written in the Mind can be more perfect than 'tis perfectly written there, will pass all Minds to comprehend.

Or if by the Law of Nature they mean a Collection of Precepts, picked now by one and then by another, through the several Ages of the World, But besides that this is as much an external Law to the Bulk of Mankind, and as much taken upon Trust too, as any Revelation: And beside, that it may be much questioned, whether any right Sentiments that dropt now and then from the Heathen Philosophers, were not rather owing to Tradition than any Reach of their own Reason: I would ask how long has the World been standing, before these Men could perfect their Collection of that Law, when never till this we have a full and clear System of the same? Strange! that a Law always perfect in every one, should yet be near six thousand Years old before it could be perfect in any; that a Law should be plain, simple, universal and unanimous, and yet never till now understood.

Besides, I might here ask, what one Law is there in all their Collections, wherein all the Heathen Nations, or even the most learned of them, have agreed? I shall not take up any Time in making an Induction of Particulars, wherein they differed in moral and theological Points; let it be sufficient that I pose every one to find out any one Thing wherein they could agree.

P R O P. XIII.

Reason and Revelation are very consistent.

ALlow it but possible, that God can reveal his Mind about some Things which our Reason could never have otherwise reached; or that 'tis possible he can satisfy us, that this Revelation is divine, the Place that Reason and Revelation have consistently together, in the Conduct of Souls to eternal Happiness,

ness, will evidently appear. The very Supposition makes Revelation here to be the only perfect Rule; for if it was Reason, then it would be sufficient of itself to attain such a Knowledge without a Revelation, contrary to the Supposition laid down.

Reason is of great Use to satisfy us, that the sacred Scriptures contain a System of the best Laws that ever obtained in the World; and also to give full Satisfaction, that there are such clear Proofs of a divine Revelation, as are sufficient to convince all the unprejudiced. But should one reject a divine Revelation, because it discovers many Things above his Comprehension; he may with the like Reason reject every Thing in Nature, there being none of God's Works that can be searched out unto Perfection; for as in the Word of God, after we have reached what is plain and obvious, which is all that is absolutely necessary to the spiritual Life, we land in something incomprehensible; so is it in every Work of God, there being none of them but what have the Signature of the divine Incomprehensibleness. What's necessary to the human Life is as plain to the Plowman as to the Philosopher, while the Philosopher in ransacking Nature cannot comprehend the least Part of it.

Because there is nothing in Revelation against sound Reason, should one therefore affirm, that nothing in Revelation can be true, if we could not first have discovered it by our Reason? This is plainly to say, that Revelation is needless if it be needful; or that which is intended to perfect the Light of Nature, is to be rejected if it discover more Light; or 'tis to say, that God cannot reveal what we know not.

Or should one infer, because Reason has as much Light as to see there is an infinite perfect Being, therefore it must know before hand every Thing he can reveal, or require of us as our Duty. I would not think so, if all Men were in as perfect a State as ever *Adam* was, unless one could prove, that it was impossible that God could make any further Revelation of him-
self

self unto him, or that God had revealed unto *Adam* all that was possible to be revealed.

Or if when it is granted by most Divines, that Reason is to admit or reject a Revelation, according as it sees it congruous, or contrary to the self-evident Dictates of natural Light; should one conclude therefore it is capable of knowing every Thing without a Revelation: One may with the like Reason say, a Man is sure his Reasoning is false, if it contradict the standing Testimony of all his Senses; therefore his Reason can make no Discoveries but what his Senses have made.

Or should he conclude, because Reason must judge about every particular Thing revealed, therefore the Light of Nature, and the Light of Revelation are commensurate: In like Manner one may reason, Telescopes cannot discover Objects at a Distance without the Sight of the Eye; therefore the naked Eye can see these Objects as well without as with them.

'Tho' the Light of Nature is sufficient to teach us, that true Religion consists in entertaining such Notions of God as are worthy of him, yet when it comes to Particulars, it cannot distinguish between what is worthy of God, and what is not, as is evident from the State of all Mankind destitute of Revelation, who had but gross and mistaken Sentiments of the Deity, and little Knowledge of true Religion, or of the Nature of Things: Yet there is Light sufficient to see the Evidences of a divine Revelation, especially those that are glaring, and strike upon the Senses, as Miracles, the fulfilling of Prophecies, &c. And when thus satisfied of a Revelation, if it can know any Thing at all of God, it must necessarily confess *he is wiser than Man*, and so may reveal what otherwise we could never have possibly discovered.

If Reason instruct us in some general Notions of God, which no Revelation can contradict, doth it hence follow, that it can tell us of all that is necessary to be known of God and his Will? Or if Reason can

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find nothing in the most sublime Discoveries which God vouchsafes of himself to us, repugnant to the divine Nature and Perfections, will it hence follow, that Reason, without the Benefit of Revelation, can make such Discoveries, or that they are false if it does not? In the same Manner it may be argued, If a Mathematician finds the *Newtonian* Philosophy agreeable to the Laws of Matter and Motion, so may a Plowman without Mathematicks; or if he does not, the *Newtonian* Philosophy is false.

We know the Doctrine of the Scriptures to be worthy of God, because it contains the most just and honourable Sentiments of the Deity, and delivers a Law more perfect in itself, and more suitable unto us, whether considered as rational or revolted Creatures, than ever otherwise obtained among Men: Particularly it teaches such a profound Veneration of God, and Devotedness to him, such Aspiration of the Soul after the nearest Likeness to him, such Refinement from Earth, and Purgation of Soul from carnal Inclinations; such a high Complacency in God, and fervent Love to him, and extensive Love and Good-will unto Men; such Deadness to the World, and such Elevation and Bent of the Soul to Things above; such Humility, Thankfulness; and, in a Word, such a *reasonable Service*, as was never before so much as heard of in any Religion on Earth. And if we be sure the Doctrine of the Gospel is congruous to the Perfections of God, and necessary to the State and Circumstances of Man, it will be most unreasonable to reject it, because it makes a Discovery of many Things we cannot see through; because this were to make the Comprehension of our Minds the Test or Measure of divine Revelation, while yet there is nothing in God, or in Nature, we really comprehend.

Much less if a Doctrine, nowise inconsistent with any of the known and uncontestible Dictates of Nature; but, on the contrary, tending to improve it in all its Branches, and refine and perfect all our Faculties,

us, and not to the Nature and Perfections of God. And even supposing that all the Fitness of Actions have Relation to us, and our State in the World, yet unless a Man be not only a *Deist*, but also what is called a mortal *Deist*, I mean, deny not only a Revelation, but a future State, he must necessarily confess, that the Divine Precepts have a further Reference than to this Life; that they extend to some State of Things in the other World we cannot pry into. And how should one know all the Reasons that relate to that State, when he knows so little of the State itself?

But this is not all I intend. By positive Precepts, I mean Precepts about Things indifferent in themselves, or Things which previously to such a Command might be either done or not done, without any Sin. And I am so far from thinking, that the ingrafting of some positive Institutions into a perfect System of natural Precepts, is a Thing unworthy of God, that on the contrary, in my Apprehension, 'tis necessary to true Religion; there can hardly be any Religion without them; or if there should, however such a Religion might be said to be a Compliance with what is reasonable, yet it could not be said to be an Obedience to what is commanded; or if there is in it an Obedience to the Law, yet none to the Lawgiver; that is, there is no pure Respect to the Authority commanding. To reason us into Duty is one Thing, to command us is another; there is Compliance in the first, but pure Obedience can obtain only in the last.

And what Religion can we have towards God, without an Impress of his Sovereignty upon our Spirits, as well as his other Perfections? And what Sense have we of this, unless he make us sensible by one Command or other, that his Will in itself is a sufficient Law.

Yea further, the Belief of positive Institutions, as I conceive, is necessary for the very Assurance of our eternal Happiness. How can an immortal Life to any Creature have any natural and necessary Connection
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with the Nature of God? What Connection can it have with any thing in God, except his positive Will and Pleasure? He who needed not give us any Being at all, what Obligation could he be under to continue us in Being for ever, unless it was by his own free Constitution? His Goodness was the same from everlasting, and if it did not oblige him to make Man from Eternity, nor even any sooner than he hath actually done; how doth his Goodness oblige him to continue us for ever? What Assurance then can we have of an everlasting Life, but from the positive Will of God? Yet without such an Assurance, there can be neither any kindly Homage to God, nor any Quiet and Comfort in our Minds.

If any should here alledge, that by shewing the natural Connection of the positive Precepts of God with the Duty and Happiness of Man, I turn them out of the Nature of positive Institutions. I answer, This is just what I intend; they are Precepts of this Kind that do most illustrate the Supremacy of God, and the Inferiority of Man: and do most testify, that any Signification of his Will should be thought a sufficient Law to us. And if there be any Virtue or Happiness in Conformity to God, a Constitution of this Kind is necessary to us: For what Conformity is there in us to the Sovereignty and Independency of God, without an implicate Subjection to his Will? And when taken in this View, the Action required is no more indifferent, tis adopted into Morality, and the Reason of it is moral and eternal.

For the Question here is not, whether God may institute a Duty without any Reason; but whether or not his absolute Authority can be a Reason sufficient; that is, whether or not an Institution about what is indifferent antecedently to his Appointment, may not be for his Glory? Which is the same as if it were asked, whether or no the Display of his Authority makes any Part of the Divine Glory? And if so, whether again, such an Institution may not also naturally con-

duce to our Happiness; that is, in other Words, whether our chief Happiness consists in a Conformity unto, and a Well-pleasedness with every Perfection in the Deity, as well as the whole Constellation of them together? And if a pure Regard cannot be so well express'd to absolute Authority, as in Obedience to positive Institutions; and if this have also a natural Tendency to our Happiness, the Question again is, Whether any Action, having such a Fitness for compassing such Ends, can be any longer said to be indifferent?

Without positive Institutions Divine Authority, as such, can never be exercised by the supreme Ruler of the World, nor can the Creature do any thing to testify his Homage to the same: For the doing an Action under this formal Conception of Obedience, must have Respect purely to the Command of Authority. And if it be good for the rational Creature to love and honour his Maker, and if the unlimited Authority of God be a Motive to love and honour him, as well as his Benignity, and perhaps a more loyal Expression of Love and Regard, because less selfish, who sees not that a due Regard to positive Institutions, as 'tis necessary to the Rectitude, so also to the Happiness of the rational Creature?

Whatever Liberty the Law of Nature hath given Men in Things indifferent, yet being this is a free Gift, God may revoke it at Pleasure; and this very Restraint becomes not only an Act of Sovereignty, but also of Goodness to his Creatures, when the same is a Hedge to all the invariable Laws of God, or is a fit Means of securing Obedience to them, as is the Case of divine positive Institutions: For 'tis evident to every one that knows any thing of the human Nature, that the Senses can be much assistant to Reason in its Devotion: And again, that an internal Religion cannot be long maintained without an external: And further, that an external Religion must be express'd at some Time, and in some Form or other. And is it not evident from all this, that stated Solemnities appointed for the

the worshipping of God, and stated symbolical Rites appointed for a solemn binding us to his Service, will more effectually secure our Duty to him, than the leaving every Man to do in this according to his Reason, or his Fancy, or as he is at Leisure, or finds himself in any good Humour for the same?

Yea the very Law of Nature, I had almost said the first Dictate of it, teaches us to submit to the absolute Authority of our Creator in every Instance wherein he testifies his Will. And if the Happiness of all Beings consists in the Perfection of their Nature, and if the Nature of a rational Being is most perfect when 'tis perfectly rational, and it 'tis the most rational Thing in the World, to be delighted with the Will of its rightful and unlimited Sovereign, then positive Institutions themselves are founded upon eternal Reasons.

If it is necessary we should obey the Law of Nature, it is also necessary we should obey any other Law God shall appoint, since the Law of Nature subjects us to the Authority of God: And if it be God's Authority only that makes the Dictates of Nature to be Laws, 'tis evident that the binding Force of such Laws is not from their intrinsic Reasonableness, but from the Authority stamp'd on them: And hence positive Institutions being stamped with such Authority, have what is the proper Form of Laws, as well as these called *the Laws of Nature*. Much more may this satisfy when it can never be proven, that a Command issued out as a Test of Sovereignty, and a Trial of Obedience, is a commanding without any Reason; or that 'tis a Thing unreasonable for a rational Creature to think, that the declared Will of God is a Motive sufficient of itself to keep it from Evil; and much more yet, when there are few Men that find it not a stronger Bond of Duty than any Reasoning of their own about the Fitness or Unfitness of Actions.

If God has a Right to reduce us to nothing, may he not also command every Thing that is not hurtful, as
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the Matter of positive Institutions is; for were they hurtful, they would cease to be indifferent, and so go out of the Question. So that if Mr. *Tindal*, or any other Infidel, should represent positive Institutions requiring a Thing, whether right or wrong, because he will have it done, this is but telling the World they never intended to argue fairly on the Subject he writes of.

Yea further, he that hath made us, suppose even innocent, can do us no Wrong, unless he place us in such Circumstances as are worse than not to be at all, far less when he requires what is indifferent, and what doth us no Manner of Harm.

I may further add, that if the only Reason why we forbear what is forbidden, is, because 'tis naturally hurtful, then the Authority of God is good for nothing, nor could there be any Crime in contemning the same; when yet it would extinguish all Religion and Virtue, and unhinge God's Government in the World, if the absolute Right of this supreme Ruler should not be ascertained and vindicated: And much more will this Argument hold, when a simple Regard to the Will of the Ruler is for the Good of the ruled, and is the very Soul and Spirit of all moral Virtues, and constitutes the Morality of them; for however I see such Actions serve my Interest, yet the Morality of these Actions lies not in this, but in their Conformity to some Rule, and the supreme Rule of all is the Will of God.

The intrinsick Reasons of Duty are beyond the Reach of the most Part of Mankind; and if all are loosened from Duty, that either do not, or cannot see the natural intrinsick Reasons thereof, then as none such could offend either by Commission or Omission, so by such a Scheme as this, the Darkness and Error of our Minds would become the Measure of the Divine Law, which yet is designedly given for the removing of the one, and the correcting of the other.

On the other hand, if Ignorance of the Reasons of a Law doth not loose us from the Obligations thereof,

of, or if we are not disobliged from Duty, because we see not the antecedent natural Reasons of the same, then a simple Signification of the Divine Will is sufficient, tho' we see not the Reason thereof; and if so, it is sufficient of itself without any more: For besides *non entis* and *non apparentis eadem est ratio*, it is certain God has a Right to command as far as we are bound to obey; and hence has a Right to command without any Reasons proper to the Matter of our Duty, if we are bound to obey without any such Reasons.

But let us suppose God should open up to us all the Reasons of his Government, and all the Secrets of his State, what if the most Part do not understand these Reasons, or cannot search into them? What if they do not take with us? What if we think them not sufficient? How few Criminals, as for Instance, will be satisfied of the Reasons of several of the Laws of Nature, and less yet of the Penalty annexed to them? And all that deny positive Institutions, by the same Argument they plead for the Reasons of a Law, they must plead also for the Reasons of its Sanction. Again, what if Mankind differ in their Reasons, so that what shall appear a good Reason to one, shall cast up trifling to another? For do not we see Men of equal Capacities, by Reason of some Interest, some Prejudice, some Bias or Prepossession of Mind, make very different, yea contrary Conclusions? In such a Case who shall be Judge between every Man and his Neighbour? Or rather the Question comes in here, Who shall be Judge between a Man and his Maker? O what Confusion must ensue, if not the Will of God commanding, but the intrinsick Reasons of the Command; yea not the Reasons of the Thing commanded either, but our Apprehension of these Reasons, so infinitely different, were made the Measure of our Duty to him!

Again, Without allowing the sovereign Will of God to be a sufficient Reason in itself, beyond which we need not enquire, how can a querulous Soul be
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quieted, when perhaps he finds, that tho' he is not a greater Sinner than others, yet he is more plagued? It will not be to the Purpose to tell him, he suffers nothing but what he deserves, since he will readily own this: But then the Question turns, Why more punished than those of equal, or of more Guilt than himself?

What but the sovereign Pleasure of God can make a Difference among Men of equal Merit and Necessity, or of equal Unworthinets and Misery? *Or if the Tables are not turned, *i. e.* if he who is most forlorn is not the most happy, or he that is in the most happy State is not the most wretched, when the Defect is equal, is it not even so, because it pleaseth God?

All Divines own, that God's Will *ad extra* is free, and that he willeth not *ad ultimum potentia*, or *ad ultimum bonitatis*, a Thing incompatible with his Infinity, and a Point that at once answers a great Part of *Tindal's* Book. And now, if God limits himself in his Operations of Power and Goodness, how is this to be resolved but into his Sovereign Will? For if it is the Creature's Good, as such, that is, his principal, or only Reason and Motive, why was the World of no earlier Date; and why is not every one of the Creatures in it more happy? If to make them happy be reasonable, to make them sooner happier would be yet more reasonable: Or if the whole Reason of their Make was, that the Goodness and Wisdom of God should appear in putting them into a happy State, the more there is of this, the more of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness of God will appear; and yet 'tis evident that every Creature is not as happy as infinite Power can make it. How shall this be accounted for, but from the supreme Authority of God, and the absolute Right that the Maker hath to dispose of what he has made? And is not Sovereignty as much manifested in abridging Favours, as in a total Denial of them?

If God hath framed a whole System of Laws that
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have a natural Connection with our Happiness, hath he so little Right in his Creatures, as that he may not bind them in some Instances to his Authority simply as such? Or does his Authority deserve so little Regard by us, as that we may despise the same, if he give not to us *an Account of his Matters*? Yea, let me yield, that Religion requires nothing but what is for our Good; it must also require positive Institutions, because 'tis good, yea necessary, we should implicitly obey the Will of God, and this has a natural Tendency to our Happiness, if it be rightly understood. Should one indeed dream of a Happiness, without a humble Veneration of the Majesty of God, a bowing to his Authority, without supreme Love to him, and an Impression corresponding to all his several Perfections; that is, should he conceive a Thing impossible, *viz.* a chief Happiness without the chief Good, or without any Conformity or Suitableness in us to the same, or Capacity for the Fruition thereof; then he will not obey if he sees not the Command agreeable to what he apprehends is good for him. The very Root this is of all our Apostacy from God. But on the other Hand, if we place our supreme Happiness in a supreme Respect to God, and all his glorious Perfections, then we will be pleased with the Exertments of his Authority, as well as of every other Perfection in him.

Yea, the very natural and necessary Connections and Relations of these called *natural Precepts*, if this Matter be well considered, perhaps are owing to the Establishment of a positive Constitution. Suppose that God had implanted in Man as great Affection to all his Fellow-creatures, as an affectionate Parent has to his dutiful Children, where there are no separate or interfering Interests; (I think none will imagine this impossible, we find some Hints like it in Nature) had such a Constitution taken Place, who sees not what vast Alteration it would have made in all relative Duties, and in the Laws of God about them? So that
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These called *eternal and immutable Relations*, seem themselves to be founded on a positive Constitution; at least it must be owned, that the Will of God is antecedent to all Reasons and Relations depending on the same.

Yea, I may also add, that we ourselves are arbitrary Beings: Either our Creation must be by an arbitrary *Fiat*, or it must have a natural and necessary Connection with the Nature of God; a *Midst* here will not be easily conceived; For to say, it was what his Perfections required, his Nature and Perfections being the same; this would be saying his Nature required it; and his Nature being always the same from Eternity, this Universe behoved to be from Eternity too: Or if a *Deist* should think there is no Absurdity in this, (some of them being ready even to make a God of the World) I add, it follows with the like Evidence, that every individual Creature behoved to be from Eternity likewise, if the Nature of God required he should make it.

We are then ourselves but arbitrary Beings; and hence it becomes us not to quarrel with arbitrary Institutions more than with arbitrary Constitutions.

PROP. XV.

Religion towards God is the Foundation and first Principle of all Moral Virtue.

Wherein doth Morality consist, but in doing the Duties we owe to the Society whereof we are Members? And is not God at the Head of this Society, and the Centre of this Unity? We are not a Crowd of independent Atoms, nor a Herd of Animals, but a Race of immortal Spirits, who have God for our Father, and who, as he has tied us in all the Relations we stand in to one another; so he hath more especially

ally bound and obliged us to himself our Head and Original.

I'll mention two of the most cardinal Virtues, for the clearing of this, *viz.* Justice and Charity: As to the first, What Right can we claim which is not from God and dependent upon him? 'Tis God that hath determined the separate Rights and Claims of Men; and hence all Injustice is primarily a breaking over his Marches, and at once a robbing of God and a robbing of Man.

And whatever Resemblance there may be of Charity in any Action of ours, yet if it wants a predominant Respect to God, it wants the very constituent Form, Life, and Soul of Virtue: For whatever we love or serve, if not in him and for him; instead of being a Virtue, it becomes the very Idol of the Soul.

And how bravely soever Men may talk, that 'tis a God-like Thing to be doing Good; yet to attempt to do it without acknowledging our Dependence on God, and Subjection to him, instead of being a moral Virtue, would be the setting up to be so many Gods; small Gods I shall allow you to call them, or even Dung-hill Gods, if you please; yet they claim to be independent ones; that is, they attempt to have all of themselves, and live on themselves, which is God's incommunicable Prerogative, and say not, *Where is God my Maker?*

If it is said by some, that Self-Love is the first Principle of moral Virtue, I shall be glad if this can be explained into any Orthodox Meaning; but to me it appears not as a true View of the Nature and Relations of Things to one another.

What Step can one reach in the Progress of Virtue, till he first consider what he is; when this very Consideration is necessarily antecedent to any Behaviour suitable to his State? Is not a Man in the first Place to mind he is a Creature? And how can he mind this, without at the same Time minding his Dependence on his Original? Dependence being essentially

conceived in the very first Notion he can have of himself.

If one would behave like himself, (the very Total Sum of moral Virtue) must he not consider first what his self is? What is good or not good cannot so much as take place in any Man, till he first consider to whom it is good. There is an eternal moral Fitness in this. How can we judge according to Truth, or proceed according to Duty, without minding we are Creatures? And how can this be minded again, without including what is essential to, and inseparable from the same; that is to say, our Dependence on the Original of our Being: And hence I say, that Religion towards God, or an acknowledged Dependence on him, is the first Principle of moral Virtue.

Let me suppose a Man dropt from the Clouds: I am so far from thinking that his own Good, his own Apprehension of Good sure must be meant here; I am so far from thinking, that this must be the whole Measure of all his Conduct, that, in my Opinion, *Adam* and *Eve* fell from their Integrity by this very Principle. They perceived the Fruit was pleasant unto the Eye, and sweet unto the Taste, and they were taken with Satan's Arguments; the very same as are made use of by Infidels at this Day; that God would be a partial-capricious Being, and envious of the Good of Mankind, if he should restrain Men from what is apparently for their Good.

'Tis certain our greatest Self-interest lies in Conformity to God, and Communion with him; so that the intending of God, and the pursuing of our most noble and most adequate Self-interest can never be actually separate: Yet for all this, should one make his Self-interest the first Spring, or the formal Reason of his Love to God, then God would be loved not for his own Sake, but for ours; and which is the Sum of all Impiety, we would be Lovers of ourselves more than of God.

Yet further, if Self-love be the first Principle of mo-

ral Virtues, it must also be their last End; the last End being the Principle of the Soul's Motion, and the Reason of its Action. But I think it altogether absurd to say, That Self-interest must be Man's chief and last End in all his Actions; for nothing should be Man's chief End, but what he may make an Object of religious Worship, which essentially includes in it, that the Object be esteemed and loved above all Things, or, in other Terms, That it be chiefly and finally intended. 'Tis the chief End that is only esteemed for itself; and intended for itself, and all other Ends are but as subordinate Means.

Again, as I take it for a certain Truth, that the esteeming and loving, and hence the intending God above all Things is necessarily included in religious Adoration; so, in the next Place, I observe, that it is not divine Goodness *qua* communicative to us; or, in other Words, it is not the Communication of this Goodness to us that is precisely the Object of Worship. The formal Reason of any Thing, strictly speaking, is but one, and 'tis that from the Concession of which the Thing or Effect, whereof it is the Cause or Reason, doth result. Now the formal Cause or Reason of all religious Duty is the divine Nature: And God, under this formal Notion of being a Benefactor to us, is not God; for 'tis an Expression, as they speak, in the Concrete; whose Form is in the Abstract, which is that of his bestowing Benefits on Man: But his Deity, and his bestowing Gifts on Mankind, are not the same, since he might never have given us so much as Being, when yet *from everlasting to everlasting he is God*: From all which I infer, that 'tis not our Self-interest that can be the first Principle, or the last End, or the formal Reason of our Conduct God-wards, nor of any moral Virtue, if they have any Reference to God.

The Question is not, whether Self-love be a natural Principle; but whether a Man should begin at it as the Standard and Measure of his moral Actions; that is,

the Question is, whether Self is to be placed in the Centre, and God and the Universe in the Circumference, as *Machiavel* describes his Politician? Nor is the Question, whether it be our Interest to love God, but whether he should be loved only on that Account? that is, whether he should be loved for his own Sake; or only for ours?

If Love to God be measured only by our Self-interest, then we would love him no further than as we are satisfied this turns to our Account, and so our Love to him would be limited, when yet his infinite Perfections require it should be boundless.

Nothing can rise above its Principle; and if Self-love be the first, and the reigning Principle in the Soul, the infinite God is used only as a subordinate Mean to that great Thing called *Self*, which yet evanishes, or shrinks into a Point *before the Lord, and the Majesty of his Glory*.

I would ask here vainly glorious Self, Whether God has not a Right to take away the very Being? And if so, Whether thou should own this Right belongs to him? And if so, again, whether in Consequence of this thou should yield *unto God the Things that are God's*; that is, yield not only all the Sweetness and Comforts that are better than Non-being, but even thy Existence itself? And if this ought not to be refused, is it not evident, that Self in all its constituent Parts ought to be denied for the Glory of God? And hence 'tis not the Principle or Measure of our Duty to him.

As Self-love is a natural Principle, it is and must be universal; and what is in every one cannot be a discriminating Principle between the good and the bad. If it be said, that the Principle of vicious Actions is a partial Self-love, but the Principle of virtuous Actions is an adequate Self-love; this very Thing disproves the general Proposition, That Self-love is the Principle of moral Virtues: For if not Self-love in general, but Self-love duly qualified, ought to be the first Principle
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of our Actions, then these Qualifications must flow from some other Principle antecedently necessary to make even Self-love itself a moral Act. And should it be said, that the adequate Self love begins at supreme Love to God, as the leading Principle? as this would be a disputing against I know not whom; so I think it not an exact Way of speaking, when the plain Meaning of it is, that supreme Love to God is the first Principle of moral Virtue.

Either Love to God must be the predominant Affection, or not; if not, it is not a moral Act of Love; because, which is the Depravation of the Soul, its Love is displaced: If it is, or if 'tis allowed, that our supreme Love ought to be to God, to bring this under the formal Notion of Self-love; and hence infer, that Self-love is the first Principle of moral Virtues, is a confounding of all our Ideas, either of the Love of God, or the Love of ourselves.

If Self-love determine different Men to opposite Pursuits and Practices, then Self love, as such, cannot be the first Principle of moral Virtue. But Self-love duly qualified; that is, as it takes in the pleasing of God, and all the Creatures we are associate with: The Meaning of which is, 'tis not Self-love but virtuous Self-love that is virtuous, a Point I take none ever denied. But then, if it be not Self-love as such, that is the Virtue, but the right Direction of that Love; that is, indeed the beginning it as it should be, or 'tis the terminating it mainly on God, as what includes in it all our most valuable Interests. But if so, then our Love is either virtuous or vicious, according as God is preferred to the Creature or not; and hence the whole Morality of the Love proceeds from the superior Respect it has to God, which again is a saying, that supreme Love to God is the first Principle of moral Virtue.

'Tis owned, that our chief Regard is to be had unto the great Head of the human Society, and our greatest Interest lies in our having a chief Regard to

him: And now the Question is, What ought first or chiefly to determine us in Point of Duty? Whether our own Interest, or the divine Excellency and Authority? If it be our Interest, then we may desire to be as Gods; that is, we might set up for Independency, were it possible, tho' in direct Opposition to the divine Will.

We would differ widely, yea infinitely in this Controversy, what is best for a Man's Self, if God did not decide the Question: So that a Regard to the Mind and Will of God is, in Order of Nature and Time, previous to the Knowledge of Self-interest; and a virtuous Self-love cannot take place while Self-interest is wholly mistaken.

The Scriptural Account of our natural Depravation, (particularly that we are Haters of God and of one another) is verified from the daily Observation and Experience of the human Kind; and therefore what is called an adequate Self-love, or a Self-love including in it Love to God and our Fellow-creatures, is not a natural Principle, but is wrought in us by superveening Grace: By which 'tis evident, that another Principle, than what is in us by Nature, is necessary to qualify or rectify such a Self-love, or rather to implant the same in us.

The Apostle *John* shews us where to begin Virtue, when he tells us, *By this we know that we love the Children of God, when we love God*; that is, we cannot have sincere Love to Men till first we have supreme Love to God. And if Love to ourselves is the Measure of our Love to another, according to that Rule celebrated by some of the wiser Heathens, *Whatsoever ye would have Men to do unto you, do ye the same to them*; or, as it is otherwise expressed, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself*: It follows with the like Evidence, that by this we know whether we love ourselves if we love God: So that instead of having any true Self love before we love God, we must first be Lovers of God, and hereby we shall know if

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we love ourselves: And hence again it is evident, that Love to God must preceed any true Self-love, and what is not true Self-love, or has nothing virtuous in it, cannot be a Principle of Virtues.

As the whole Impurity of the Soul lies in placing Self in the Room of God; so the very first Step of our returning to God is by turning from Self: And hence the first Lesson Christianity teaches us, is Poverty of Spirit, or Humility of Soul. And 'tis evident, to begin with this is to follow Nature; for if we follow Nature, and judge of Things they are, or judge according to Truth, before we can desire God's Esteem and Approbation, we must acknowledge we have forfeited the same: And again, we must first love him; for it would be as impious and absurd to say, we desire the Good-liking of God tho' we have no Respect to him, as to say, we have a Respect to him, tho' we care not whether we please him.

The like may be said of the Desire of Respect and Esteem of others, which is not what we should begin at in the Pursuit of Virtue, but what is rather to be considered as an Appendage or Consequence of the same: For as our Love to our Neighbours is not to be measured by their Love to us; for *if we love them only that love us, what do we more than* Publicans and Sinners? So our loving our Neighbour ought in Reason to preceed any Desire of their Esteem and Respect to us: Yea, we would be virtuous, before we can justly expect the Approbation of others. We seek the Good-liking and Approbation of others before we can, in the Exercise of Virtue, approve of ourselves, and would be a seeking from them what we are conscious we do not deserve, and which we think they ought not to give; which again makes it evident, that a Desire of Esteem is not among the first Principles of moral Virtue.

If the Desire of the Esteem of others were one of the first Principles of Virtue, then instead of the received Rule, rather study to be good than to be thought

thought so; the Order should be inverted after this Manner, let your first Design be to be thought good, and for this End study to be really so. And if an Action rise to no higher Degree of Virtue than the End of it is, then 'tis evident, according to this Scheme, that 'tis not real, but apparent Goodness, that is the principal Virtue.

The Question is not, whether the Desire of Esteem is an Appetite that universally prevails among Mankind? But whether it be a Principle, or among the first Principles of moral Virtue? Or the Question is, Whether that which is common to all Men can be a distinguishing Principle in the best Sort of them?

'Tis certain no Man can like Disgrace and Infamy, for its own Sake, yet for the Sake of God he can and ought to be content with Reproaches, which shews that a supreme Regard to God and to his Will should take place before any Desire of Esteem; yea I may say before the very Desire of God's Esteem: For to seek God's esteeming of us without previous Respect to him, or to expect that he should be pleased with us, while we are not pleased with him, seems to be equally impious, and impossible in Nature.

There is this material Flaw in the Scheme of making Self-love the first Principle of moral Virtue, that our necessary and essential Dependence on the great Author of our Being, is displaced in the Progress, which in Order of Nature is prior to every Thing else; and what is first in Nature ought first to be eyed in any Scheme wherein we set up to follow Nature.

I think the Order of a rational Soul in the Progress of Virtue may be stated thus. If he know that he is a Creature, he cannot but first own that he has an Original; and hence must know and acknowledge who he is: And therefore must begin with the Adoration of the supreme Being. And if he is desirous to please him, he'll be careful to know what is his Will, or what he hath commanded, in order to obey the same; and thus we see him in the Way of Virtue and Duty.

And

And then as to Happiness, whether he hath an actual Reflection or not about what is good for him: He must necessarily be taken up with Objects according to their proportional Excellencies, and his Interest in them, or Obligations to them: And hence Love to God will predomine in his Soul: And hence he cannot but love, and be ready to do good to all his Fellow-creatures, partly because God commands; partly because of the proportional Excellencies that are in them, or rather because of the Signatures they have of the Divine Excellencies; and partly because of his Relation to them, and Interest in them. And here, by such orderly and placed Actings of the Soul, its Pleasure and Happiness are secured in a natural and creaturely Way; whereas to begin with making our own, which is but limited Good, the sole Measure and formal Reason of all the Love and Service we owe to God, or to make use of God as only the Means, and make Self the End; or, in a Word, if ought but the transcendent amiable Excellencies of God be the terminating Measure of our Love, that Man forgets both himself and his Maker.

PROP. XVI.

The Religion of Jesus Christ, and the Religion of Nature are not in all Respects the same.

THE representing the Christian Religion as if it was the same with the Law or Religion of Nature, is liable to the one or the other of these manifest Absurdities, as either to require the Sinner to seek Happiness by never having sinned, or else to bring a Person perfectly innocent under a Law to repent: For certain it is, that the Law of Nature, which in its original State, when only it was sufficient to answer its End, was the Law of Innocency, which being vio-
late

late by Man's Apostacy, (as is evident from *Prop. 2.*) became unuseful to the End it was made for: Hence was there a new Constitution of the Law of Grace, which alters, adds to it, or re-inforces it, according as the Nature of Things, the Exigency of Man's Case, and God's gracious Purpose would admit, or did require.

And if it be owned, that Man is fallen from his original Rectitude, and is under a Forfeiture, how is it possible but the Laws about recovering Innocency must be different from the Laws about maintaining the same? since the repenting of a fallen State, the Hope of Recovery, and the actual returning of the Soul to its former Uprightness, can have no Place in a State that is purely innocent.

Here lies the Difference between a natural and revealed Religion: The first arises from the Relation between God the Creator and his Creatures, considered as innocent Creatures; the other arises from the Relation between God as reconcilable in Christ, and us as recoverable Sinners. And tho' to oblige us to be innocent, and to oblige us to repent, are two inconsistent Obligations, which shews that the Religion of Jesus Christ, and the Religion of Nature cannot be the same; yet supposing a Revelation about a Recovery, and about God's requiring and accepting of our Repentance, there is no Law of Nature to forbid the same.

Yea further, strictly speaking, it can hardly be said, that the great End of revealed Religion is to restore the Religion of Nature, because this would imply, that whilst we are imperfect, we may be told of Means of attaining a State wherein we have never offended God by any bypast Miscarriage. The Religion of Nature lies in perfect sinless Obedience, the revealed Religion of Jesus supposes us to have violated that Law, and appoints Means to Perfection; not to Men already perfect, but that they may be so; I mean, not

to have never sinned for Time past, but that they may amend for Time to come.

Much less can the Religion of Nature teach us the Way of recovering that Religion when it is lost. If Men have not lost the Religion of Nature, any Means for the Recovery thereof are needless; if they have lost it, how can what is lost afford them any Help. A perfect Religion in any Man cannot have Means of attaining the same; when being perfect, it is already attained, and if imperfect, it cannot make up the Defect, since what should make it up is really a-wanting.

PROP. XVII.

The Religion of Jesus Christ is as much founded upon the Nature and present Relations of Things, as ever the Religion of Nature was, even in its original State.

IF Things be considered as really they are, the Gospel Scheme is congruous to the Nature, and founded on the immutable Relations of Things; that is to say, tho' God needed not have restored fallen Man more than he needed at first make him; yet having thought fit to restore him, according to the good Pleasure of his Will, (and a higher Reason than this we cannot find for the Creation of the Universe) all the Means he hath appointed have as natural and necessary a Connection with their End, as any Duty of natural Religion can be conceived to have.

'Tis confessed by our Adversaries, that our Duties arise from the several Relations wherein we are placed: And now let them but grant it as possible, which we have already proven, that we are in a lapsed State, and that through a Mediator we may recover the Favour of God and Communion with him; who sees not that this places us in a new Relation to God in Christ,

Christ, and requires of us Duties proper and correspondent to that Relation; and for which there could be no Place, if we had never come under any such Relation? If to be a Creator is one Relation, and to be a Redeemer is another, how is it possible, but that each of these Relations shall claim their respective Duties? And who sees not that the Duties belonging to the one, do as much result from the Nature and natural Relations of Things, as the Duties that are relative to the other? This none can deny, if by the Nature of Things they mean, as they ought to do, the real Situation and Circumstances of Mankind.

This would be more evident, if we could stay to prove, that there is not a Christian Grace or Virtue, but what has such a natural Connection with our State God-wards or Heaven-wards, as that it would be repugnant in the Nature of Things, that a Person should either be accepted of God, or admitted to Heaven without it.

As for Instance, the Humility and Self-denial wherewith the Gospel begins, and which the Heathen Philosophy knew so little of, yet it is so necessarily connected with the immutable Nature and Reasons of Things, as that 'tis impossible to be dispensed with, and at the same time the Creature be loyal and happy. 'Tis morally and eternally fit, that we should think of ourselves as we are: And as we are Creatures, have we not more of No-being than Being; and hence are nearest to nothing: And as Sinners we are less and worse than nothing. If the Contemplation of the amiable Excellencies of God, contribute any thing to the Soul's Satisfaction in the other World, what is it but Humility that makes the Soul bow and bend itself unto its Original, and solace itself in a pleasant Deference to him?

And as for hungering and thirsting after Righteousness, what Good can be found in that Soul that labours under an Aversion to God and his blessed Image? And God being infinite, he would be loved by an Affection

Affection in some Sort infinite; and 'tis only by Desires the Soul stretches itself forth into a Kind of Infiniteness. And as it will be natural to the rational and loyal Creature, since his Perfection at best is but comparative, to desire more and more, so 'tis but just that he should have something in him to correspond to the Infinity of God, as well as every other Divine Perfection.

Again, the Gospel requires inward Purity of Heart as well as a blameless Conversation. And if the *Deist* will recollect himself a little in this Matter, he shall soon be satisfied of its indispensable Necessity. Let me suppose him going out of this World into the next, externally reformed, just and beneficent to his Fellow-creatures, but yet with a Heart delighting more in Things earthly than heavenly. Let me suppose again, what will happen, that such a Soul finds itself stript of its darling Object, and despairs of enjoying the same for ever; will not this very Temper make it miserable for ever? So that was there no Sentence of the supreme Judge upon the Soul, the very Want of this Heart-purity would, in the Nature of the Thing, make it miserable; which again shews the natural and eternal Fitness of this Gospel-precept.

And again, how an apostate Spirit can return unto God and its Duty without Repentance, when Repentance is the very Turning of the Course of the Soul's Motions towards God, I leave to every one to consider.

Further, What Interest can one have in a positive Constitution of Grace without Faith? Particularly

Since through the innate Darkness of our Minds, every Man is for fancying a God like himself, a God according to the natural Complexion of his own Mind, if not rather according to the natural Constitution of his Body, as is evident from the Observation of Mankind; is there not then an absolute Necessity, from the very Nature of Things, of giving up

our Understanding to the Conduct of divine Revelation?

Again, since Guilt naturally produces a Fear of the divine *Nemesis*, as is no less evident from the Sense of all Nations: And since this Fear is a boundless Passion, that is, no Man can say, it shall go this far and no further, because none knows the Power of God's Wrath; that is again, none knows to what, or to whom, or to what Measure or Degree it may extend: Hence 'tis evident the Ground of our Security from the Misery of Fear, must not be any Thing only general or indefinite, or made disputable from any Perfection in the divine Nature, otherwise it could not be proportionate to the various Degrees of Fear; or rather it could not remove any Kind or Degree thereof: For should all Grounds of Fear be removed but one, that one will be sufficient to open the Door to all the black Train of Passions that attend Guilt, which again will banish from the Mind all genuine Respect to God: It must therefore be something particular, determinate, and clearly consistent with every divine Perfection that can found our Hope and Confidence. Hence again, there is in the Nature of the Thing an absolute Necessity of the Satisfaction and Merits of a Mediator, to secure all the Benefit we can expect from Mercy; and also there is an absolute Necessity of a believing Dependence on the same, as for our Hope and Comfort, so also to work our Minds into a sincere Contrition for Sin, and to incline us to a free and chearful Obedience to the divine Will.

PROP.

PROP. XVIII.

The revealed Will of God is a more sure and a more clear Rule, both to learned and unlearned, than any abstract Reasoning from the Nature and Relations of Things.

ONE would think, that the very stating of this Matter were sufficient to clear the same, viz. Whether Men's imperfect and variable Views of Things, and the several Relations they bear to one another, be as certain and invariable a Rule as the express revealed Will of God?

Did our everlasting Interests depend on the abstract Reasonings of Mankind, how deplorable and remediless would our Condition be? There are few Men capable of reasoning abstractly from the Nature and Relations of Things, and yet fewer of doing it to Purpose.

A determinate Law about what we should do, or what we should eschew, is accommodate to the Capacity of every one of the Bulk of Mankind: But who has so little Knowledge of human Kind, as not to see, that being left to themselves, as they make contrary Conclusions, so they think themselves under contrary Obligations?

By stated Rules we come easily to see what is right, and what is wrong, in all the common and ordinary Circumstances of Life; and according to these Rules, by a certain Analogy, we may judge of our Duty in all possible Circumstances. And without such settled Rules, so different are the Manners and Customs that prevail in different Places; so strong are the Prejudices of the weak, ignorant and superstitious, and so cunning are the Intrigues of ambitious self-designing Men, that the several Tribes of Mankind would make as many different, yea contrary Rules, as their

Lusts, Passions, and Interests do differ, and it may be change them as oft as they do their Cloaths.

What Point is there in Religion, wherein the greatest Sages, among those who had only the Light of Nature to conduct them, have not contended about? So far were they from consenting in any Thing of Religion, that they differed about the great Object thereof. One of them affirms God is corporeal; another that he is not: One that he is composed of Atoms; another of Numbers: *Plato* had one Way of thinking of him; *Pliny* another: *Epicurus* thought he was an idle Spectator; the *Stoicks* place his Seat out of the World, from whence he works as a Potter turns his Frame: The *Platonicks* place him in the World, and that he governs it as he that holds the Rudder of a Ship; and yet less did they agree as to the Way of pleasing him.

The Relation we stand in to God is more natural, necessary and immutable than the Relations we stand in to one another, or any Relation of created Objects among themselves: For we could not have been at all without a Relation to our Maker, but we might have been, tho' placed in other Relations and Circumstances, with respect to one another. Hence the declared Will of God, as 'tis the most clear Rule, so 'tis the most strong and most unchangeable Bond of Duty.

We are related to God before we can come under any other Relation: And hence our immediate Homage to God is, in order of Nature, before any other Duty: And hence again, first of all we should acknowledge him; and how can we do this, without doing what is according to his Will? And who can tell what this Will is, so well as himself?

PROP.

PROP. XIX.

There may be Virtue in an Action tho' we see not the Way and Manner how the Action produces the Effect.

IF this be not true, then Clarity, the most comprehensive and beneficent moral Virtue, would be banished from the World in its most material and important Effect. I know not of a more sincere Expression of Charity, than the preserving of my Neighbour's Health and Life, for this End he is to be supplied with Food, &c. But if there is no Virtue in this, unless we perceive the Way and Manner how this Action produces its Effect; that is how Bread, as for Instance, is turned into Chile, Blood, Flesh, Bones, &c. in a human Body; then I question much if this Virtue of Charity can be found among Men.

Should it be said, 'tis sufficient we know, that the Action produces its Effect, tho' we know not the Way and Manner thereof: As this will be a giving up the Cause, or an yielding that there may be Virtue in an Action, tho' we see not the Way of its Influence; so, as I apprehend, it would appear as uncouth and incredible to one wholly a Stranger to this World, and not at all acquaint with the Animal Oeconomy, that Herbs should be converted into Bones, Flesh, Blood, &c. as any Action required in Scripture could be supposed improper to produce its Effects.

If it were absolutely requisite to Virtue, that we should see how every Action in Morality doth reach its Effect, Virtue would be a *Phœnix* in the World: The Bulk of Mankind not being able to search into the Grounds of moral Actions; and perhaps but few among the Philosophers could make a higher Claim, there being such irreconcilable Differences among them about what is true Morality, much more about the intrinſick Reasons of every moral Action.

The Will of God is antecedent and superior to all the Reasons that depend on the same; and Reasons have their ultimate Reference to his Constitution; and any Intimation of the Divine Will, as 'tis sufficient in itself, so 'tis more obvious than our uncertain Reasonings.

In a Word, were our Understanding as sharp-sighted as theirs in Heaven, we are as safe in God's Knowledge of the Reasons of Things, as in our own narrow Views; much more when our Reason, being equally poor and proud, is so ready either to be misled itself, or to mislead us; and at best is but like a Dove's Neck, that casts up a different Appearance to different Men.

PROP. XX.

God may lay down a perfect Rule, tho' he give us not Faculties of such a Make, as that it shall not be in our Power to abuse or pervert the same.

THIS Proposition I need not insist upon; for tho' Infidels have heaped together a great many Evils and Calamities, as consequential upon the Christian Religion, which yet they have been far from proving to be the native Result of its Genius and Design: And tho' the Stress of their Argument, if there be any Colour of Reason in it, turns upon this very Point, that God cannot give a perfect Law, unless also he give such perfect Faculties as that it shall not be in Man's Power to abuse that Law: Yet I think, that upon second Thoughts they will willingly quit such a Supposition, since whatever they can object against revealed Religion from this Topick, will equally impugn the Religion of Nature, if they own that God is the Author of that Religion, unless they can make it out, that the Heathens never brought any Calamities

Calamities on the World, or never were mischievous either to Christians, or to one another, because of their *Credenda*.

I am so far from thinking, that God is obliged so to perfect the Faculties of Man in his now lapsed State, as that he shall not, or cannot abuse the Law he reveals to him, that suppose Man made innocent, I think God is not bound to form him in such a Make, as that it shall not be in his Power to break his Law. My Meaning is plainly, that God is not to be found fault with, if he make Man mutable: or, which is the same, if he make Man as a Creature can only be made: Mutability, or Possibility of Change, being implied in the very Notion of any Thing that is made. And as little should his Providence be quarrelled, if having made Man mutable, he suffers him actually to change; that is, God's moral Government cannot be impeached, if he has made Man a free Agent, or having made him a free Agent, he has suffered him to exercise his Liberty, and take his Choice, when there can be neither Virtue nor Happiness without a voluntary Choice.

P R O P. XXI.

Faith is a Virtue, and Infidelity is a Vice.

I Hardly believe any Man is in Earnest, who holds the contrary of this. Where is the Man that doth not maintain some Truths, which he apprehends unreasonable and absurd to deny?

Will the *Deist* allow, that Men are as innocent that deny the Religion of Nature, as those who disbelieve the Religion of Jesus Christ? Or will they think there is no Fault in rejecting all Religions whatsoever? Since a perfect Religion, or even any Religion at all, is perfectly inconceivable without its *Credenda*; all
Religion

Religion being a Profession and Practice suitable to our Faith.

Or if they believe there is any Morality, or any Virtue at all in the World, or that there should be any; or if they think this Belief is necessary, a Belief of speculative Principles must be necessary also; since a moral Action, without its constituent Principles, which are all of a speculative Nature, is absolutely impossible, unless they place the Morality of an Action in the simple Materiality thereof; and if so, Brutes will be moral Agents as well as Men; at least it must be owned, that if moral Virtue be necessary, a Belief of the same is necessary also; and if it be a Fault to deny moral Virtue, it is also a Fault to disbelieve it.

If there be any such Thing as Truth in the World, or if there be any Truth either relating to God or our selves that concerns us, we neither judge nor act according to Truth, (when yet it is reckoned to be the Sum of natural Religion) if we do not believe the same. If these Truths shine not in their full Evidence, it must be owing to some evil Passion; for either an honest and impartial Enquiry will find out these Truths, wherein every Man is concerned, or they want sufficient Evidence.

'Tis true, the Understanding acts irresistably; but is there no Virtue in an upright and sincere Mind to receive the Truth? Or in an impartial Use of the most proper and fit Means? Have Pride, Passions, and sensual Pleasures no Hand in making Infidels; And are all these innocent Things? Or can such bad Causes have any Effect but what is bad? If Unbelief be hatched by such corrupt Passions, how can it self be innocent?

P R O P.

PROP. XXII.

The Scriptures are the best Composure that ever obtained in the World.

THE Christian here has great Advantage over the *Deist*, since the last will be puzzled to find any such Composure as they'll bring into the Field, which owes nothing either as to the Matter or Manner of its Composition to Revelation or Tradition from the same.

But to pass this, let us suppose that *Socrates, Plato, &c.* had no Notices but what they improved from the Light of Reason.

The main Difficulty here will be to find out a Standard by which we should judge of a Composure, Mankind differing very much both as to the Matter and Manner of Compositions, according to their different Tastes and Fancies.

As to their different Sentiments about the Matter of a Composure, I need not stand upon a Thing so very evident. And no less do they differ as to the Manner: Some insist upon a nice measuring of Sentences, a fine turning and polishing of Periods, a regular uniting of Words, and artificial Ranging of Figures, &c. Others again think it more suitable to a great Genius to have solid and sublime Thoughts loosely cast together in the best sounding and significant Words, and that such measured Periods and spruce Embellishments are the Conceits only of low Writers, and which either sublime Thoughts or strong Passions cannot admit of. Others again think, that neither the whole Discourse should be bound and confined to Periods, nor loose and inconnected, but rather have a Mixture of both, that it may be neither too coarse nor too strait-laced and stiff.

I shall leave the learned Disputing about these Niceties;

ties; only, which is enough for my present Purpose, I'll take it for granted, that what conveys to us the clearest and best Sentiments of the best and most valuable Things, and which concerns us most to know, that must necessarily be the best Composure. This is but saying in plain Language, that the best Composure is what is done to the best Purpose, and what most effectually reaches the best End.

And now, if it be allowed, that the best Composure conveys to us the most valuable Knowledge in the most easy and most certain Manner, what Performance can be named that may once be compared to the sacred Oracles of God? Where have you the divine Perfections of God so magnificently and gloriously displayed, or the Nature or State of Mankind so rationally and clearly opened up, or the Mysteries of Providence so unraveled? All the Things of God and his Providence had lien in an Abyss of Darkness, without a Revelation: Nor could Man have given any Account of himself, either as to his Relation to this World or the next, without the same.

Where have we the divine Majesty express'd in Terms of such Magnificence? Or the divine Goodness in Language so good and so great, as in the holy Scriptures? Are there any where such bright and transporting Views of divine Holiness, or such a profound Veneration of his infinite Perfections?

What other Composure hath such equal Plainness and Power? Or hath the true Sublime joined with such a noble Simplicity, as takes with both Learned and Unlearned, or with People of all Capacities and Characters in every Age and Place of the World?

But what Necessity is there of reasoning further in this Matter? Let us appeal to Fact, against which no Reasoning can be admitted. What other Composure hath prevailed with such a Number of Mankind to study true and solid Virtue? What but the superior Excellency and Evidence that is in the sacred Writings

could

could gain such a Number of Converts to the Strictness of the Christian Religion, when it not only had no secular Views to allure them to favour the same, but also when none could embrace the same without chusing present Suffering and embracing Death.

Again, let it be further considered, whether if the Scriptures had exhibited Religion to us in such a System, or in such a regular Form and Method as Writers have now reduced it, if this would not have created more Suspicion of a Compact among the Composers, than when penned at different Times, and containing a great Number of new heard of Doctrines, and a great Variety of Events, they do notwithstanding all conspire together in a noble Simplicity and Gravity of Narration.

Add to this, that the Revelation of God's Mind and Will is given by Way of Law; and we pose all Mankind to produce any other Law, delivered with such Dignity, and in such Perfection and Perspicuity, or in a Way so becoming the great Lawgiver.

To say that a Piece divinely inspired should have nothing obscure in it, is to say, if there be any Darkeness in our Minds, whereby we are incapacitate to comprehend what is revealed, there can be no Revelation: or 'tis to say, that 'tis impossible God can reveal any Thing of his Will to us, unless he open up all his Counsels; or that he cannot reveal clearly what he would have us to do, unless he also manifest all that himself is to do; or if he gives us Hints of future Events, to quicken our Industry, these Hints are not to be credited, unless he present us with a full View of all the Series of his Providences to the End of Time.

Which, I pray, is most becoming the divine Majesty and Wisdom? The laying open before us all the Records of Eternity, in order to our disappointing, so far as we could, the divine Designs; or the giving us dark Hints, which, tho' not fully understood now, yet in the Accomplishment are fully manifested, for the

the Glory of God, and the Confirmation of his Peoples Faith?

And let Men talk as they will of the Incomprehensibility of many Things revealed, 'tis evident there are many things in Nature, the Motion of the Winds and Seas, as for Instance, the Light of the Sun, Moon and Stars, the Conception and Birth of Creatures, the Growth of Corn and Grass, the Circulation of the Blood, the Gravitation of Bodies, &c. which if we had not daily Experience and Proof of, we would have thought them as incredible.

P R O P. XXIII.

Miracles are evident of themselves to prove a divine Authority.

IT were much to be wished, that all Divines had the same Notions, and the same Way of accounting about the Evidence of Miracles. Some modern Schemes have in this (I'm afraid) as well as in some other Points, made too liberal Concessions. If I find myself under a Necessity of differing here from some great Men, and if, through their intangling Objections, this Part of my Discourse shall swell to a Size beyond what is proportional to the other Parts, I hope it will not be taken amiss.

To me it appears manifest enough, that a Power of working Miracles was the highest Evidence that ever any that wanted Satisfaction about a Revelation could desire, or that God himself thought fit to give.

Moses, Gideon, &c. did not pretend to seek any further Evidence of their divine Mission than the working of a Miracle. *Elijah* and all the People of *Israel* make their Appeal to this in that solemn Ordeal, who was the true God, the *Jehovah* of *Israel*, or the *Baal* of the *Sidonians*, 1 Kings xviii. The *Jews* said

to our Saviour, *What Sign shewest thou that we may believe in thee?* John vi. 30. And when they saw the Miracles that Jesus did, they said, *This is that great Prophet that should come into the World,* John vi. 14.

Yea God himself thought that *Moses* was instructed with sufficient Credentials when indued with this Power, *Exod. iv. 1—5.* Our Saviour Jesus Christ tells, that his Works were sufficient to bear Witness of him, *John v. 36. and x. 24.* And he required the *Jews* to believe, not his Works for his Doctrine's Sake, but his Doctrine for his Work's Sake, *John x. 37, 38. and xiv. 11.*

And how could Miracles be a Sign of future Events, as in *Isaiah xxxiii. 6, 7, 8.* if they had not Evidence of themselves? As for Instance, if the bringing the Shadow of *Ahaz's* Dial, ten Degrees backward, was not evidently by a divine Power, how could it confirm their Faith in that Event? How could they otherwise be sure of the Event, till it was accomplished? And consequently the Sign would have been to no Purpose.

Further, I think it evident that our Saviour makes his Power of working Miracles a direct Proof of a Power that is peculiar to God, as is clear from *Mark ii. 1—11.* *Jesus said unto the Sick of the Palsie, Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the Scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their Heart—who can forgive Sins but God—Jesus said, that ye may know that the Son of Man hath Power on Earth to forgive Sins, he saith unto the Sick of the Palsie, I say unto thee Arise, take up thy Bed, and go into thine own House.*

I suppose it will be yielded here to the *Pharisees*, that God only can forgive Sins; that none can remit God's Right but himself; that none can seize upon his supreme and independent Authority, nor dispense with the sacred Rights that inviolably belong to him: I think it will also be owned, that Jesus

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would

would never attempt to prove a great Power, by shewing he had a less Power.

Again, The simple removing of any one Calamity from a Person is never in the sacred Scriptures called a forgiving Sin. God's forgiving a Person has always a Respect to his Guilt, and 'tis a remitting of the Offence as done against himself. Our Saviour, *Luke vii. 48*, said to the Woman, *Thy Sins are forgiven thee*, when the Woman was not cured of any Malady, but her Guilt: Yea God may forgive Iniquity, when he takes Vengeance on Mens Inventions, *Psal. xcix. 8*.

And who that seriously considers the Point will imagine, that the delivering of a Person from one or a few Effects of Sin, will amount to a Proof of a Power to forgive Sin? Will any pretend, that every Physician that may cure a Disease, or every beneficent Person that may supply a Want, can from that Effect be said to have a Power to forgive Sins, because he delivers from some Miseries that Sin justly merits.

From all which I think it evident, that our Saviour's Argument can no otherwise prove, that he had a Power to forgive Sins, than so far as it proves, that no less Power was exerted in commanding away a Disease, without any applied Remedy, than what is requisite to forgive Sin, which is God's sole Prerogative.

Again, a creative Power is visibly seen, either as to the Matter or Manner of the Work, in the Production of these Miracles that confirm our Faith in the Scriptures; which is another Proof that Miracles have a sufficient Evidence of themselves, abstracting from the Doctrine revealed.

It cannot be expected, I should here condescend upon every Miracle mentioned in the sacred Oracles, only let it be considered, how it is possible, with a Word speaking, to give Life, or Limbs, Eyes, or multiply Bread an hundred Fold, without a creative Power.

Power. To make a Bit of Bread that was not, is to make it out of nothing; the same Power might make a World. To make an Eye to see that was naturally blind, is just such a Power as can make a new Body, or form *Adam's* Body out of the Dust. A Resurrection from the dead has always been reckoned by Christians the Effect of as great a Power as the Creation of the World, and by Heathens the one has been thought as incredible as the other.

Life is more than simple Being: If created Spirits can give Life, what should hinder them to give Entity? or rather Life has more of Entity and Power in it than simple Existence, and if a created Spirit can do the greater, he can also do the less.

And Life in a Body is more than a self-moving Spirit in it. Suppose the Soul of *Lazarus* had hovered over his Body, or even entered into it, yet unless it had animated his Organs, there could be no Life in him; and he that can give Life, must necessarily create something that was not, which creating Power is owned to be incommunicable to Things which were themselves created. Hence I think it evident, that a Power peculiar to God shines in Miracles, and hereby they are an Argument of themselves of the Truth of a Revelation, distinct from the true and excellent Doctrine therein contained.

Besides, if Miracles were not self-evident, or had not Evidence in themselves sufficient to prove a divine Authority and Mission, they could not be to any Purpose at all. If there can be nothing seen in true Miracles to distinguish them from false ones, what Use can they serve for, in Point of Evidence? Either the Finger of God is to be seen in such an extraordinary Event, or not; if not, the extraordinary Event proves nothing, and so is to no Purpose; if it is, then there is sufficient Evidence in such a Fact to attest, that the Mission and the Doctrine of the Missionary are divine. Miracles are either God's Seal set to the Confirmation of a Doctrine, or they are not; if they

are, they must have something distinguishing in them: For if other Agents had either the same Seal, or a Seal so like it as there could be no distinguishing the one from the other, 'tis evident it would be as good as no Seal; and so the all-wise God would work great Productions in vain, or to no End, or to an End of which he is frustrate by a rival Power.

If Miracles have no Evidence of themselves, and if it be the Doctrine that only enlightens the Evidence of the Miracles, then the Doctrine must first be known to be true, before we can know the Miracles to be so; and what Occasion then is for them? Or suppose a Doctrine be considered no further at first but as possible, or indifferent, or having a good Tendency, Miracles, if they have nothing peculiar in them, cannot carry us a Step further in the Enquiry, much less satisfy us that the Doctrine is of Divine Revelation: As for Instance, *Moses* he wrought extraordinary Facts for the proving the Unity of the Godhead; *Jannes* and *Jambres* attempted the like for the confirming of Polytheism; and both Parties were persuaded their Doctrine was true: Either then *Moses* was to exert a Power, which they, with the Help of their Demons, could not come up to, or else they will think, that any unusual Production doth confirm their Religion, as well as that of *Moses*.

I know that 'tis usually said, by great Men on the other Side of this Question, that Miracles cannot attest any Thing contrary to the Law and the Dictates of Nature: Hence if any Thing be advanced contrary to these plain Dictates, we can have no Regard to Miracles. But I wonder that learned Men should not see, that 'tis shifting in the Argument, when Men lay down that as a Supposition which is the precise Point denied, *viz.* That Miracles, being Exertments of Divine Power, can be wrought in Confirmation of Error. There is nothing more certain than this Proposition, That Miracles can never confirm an Error, or stablish a Vice, because God can never append the
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broad Seal of Heaven to confirm a Lie: And what then is to be subsumed? Not sure that the Supposition is Fact, but that the quite contrary is true. 'Tis evident then such a Way of Reasoning, is but a Begging the Question, or a Taking the Thing for granted which is denied; 'tis as if one were saying, was there no Sun, the Beams thereof could not demonstrate it; whilst another says, if there be Beams, they demonstrate there is a Sun in the Firmament.

As the Heathens did not so much pretend to Miracles as to Predictions, which were common among them, so the Passage, *Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.* speaks only of a Prediction of a future Event; that is, of a Sign or Wonder that was afterward to come to pass; and tho' the Event should answer according to a luckie Guess, or according to the fanciful Impression of a Visionary, 'tis evident, all this says nothing, either *pro* or *con* in the present Question; and the less, that suppose even something wrought by that pretended Prophet, 'tis not told what that is; and hence we have no Means of knowing what Power was necessary to effect the same.

And yet less can what is objected from *Mat. xxiv. 24.* (*For there shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew great Signs and Wonders*) weaken what is said of the Evidence of Miracles. I think, on the contrary, that this Text doth rather strengthen the Argument: For who can suppose our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when designing to confirm the Faith of his Disciples, would reason after this Manner? Believe me for my Works Sake, tho' false Prophets shall arise, and produce Works so great, as that the Wit of Man shall not find in my Works any Thing superior to theirs.

Far less would our Saviour argue I refer you to my Works as a Seal of my Divine Mission and Doctrine, tho' others have the same Seal and the same Proof to confirm an opposite Doctrine.

'Tis evident then our Saviour means such *Prestigia*,

Cheats, or *lying Signs and Wonders*, as are spoke of 2 *Thef.* ii. 9. This appears the more that he tell us, that 'tis impossible the Elect shall be deceived by them; whereas were there alike Power, as in our Saviour's Miracles, 'tis impossible they should not be deceived.

Whatever Difficulty shall cast up from what the *Egyptian* Magicians are said to do, these two Things appear evident to me, *first*, That if the Magicians did really turn their Rods into Serpents, they had a creative Power in their Hands. The Turning of a Rod into a living Serpent is as much a Creation as the forming *Adams* Body out of the Dust; yea as the forming something out of nothing, since here there is a Progress from a Non-life to a Life, which is a real Thing.

Again, 'tis no less evident also, that a creative Power is incommunicable to any Creature, much less to Devils. 'Tis impossible there can be any Exertment of Power beyond creating: Hence tis impossible this Power can be lodged in a Creature, because there would be no Power left peculiar to God, if a creative Power be not solely his.

Least of all, could it be possible, that two creating Powers should Counter one another, especially as to the Object of Worship, and so leave us confounded between them; none of them exerting a Power superior to the other, if both should create. This is a Thing utterly inconceivable. Could we even suppose two independent Beings, infinitely good, we might be infallibly certain, they could never counteract one another: For tho' none of them (according to such a Supposition) could be limited by the other, yet each of them might be limited by his own infinite Goodness from opposing the other in any Good Work; especially in establishing the true Religion. But to suppose two creative, and hence two independent Powers opposing one another, is to suppose two Anti-gods; *i. e.* two infinitely opposite Gods; and so as the one must needs be conceived to be infinitely good, the other

other behoved to be infinitely evil; and a Substance infinitely evil is infinitely impossible.

From all which I infer, that the Magicians did not really turn their Rods into Serpents, but so imposed upon the Senses of their Spectators, as to make them think they did.

And why should we doubt of this, when the Effect of their pretended Power was not when they would have had it to subsist, and disappeared when it should have been seen? What can be made of their Serpents disappearing, but that they aimed to do what they could not make good? They produced an Appearance, which could not stand Trial, or which, when examined, disappeared. If the Appearance vanished during the very Contest, it was to no better Purpose than if nothing had been seen. And what seems no less than to demonstrate all was Cheat and Delusion, 'tis said, *Moses's Serpent swallowed up their Serpents*. How easily might the Spectators here have insulted the Magicians; if you can immediately produce Serpents, why cannot you as easily preserve them in Being? the Preservation of any Thing being full as easy as an immediate Production. Or if you can bring Plagues upon *Egypt*, why cannot you as easily remove these that are brought? it being easier by far to kill than to create.

If it should be objected, That if it be once allowed, that the Senses can be cheated, the Evidence of all Miracles will be weakned, which are so many solemn Appeals to the Senses of Mankind. I wonder how this comes to be sustained as a perplexing Difficulty in the present Case, which no Man regards in any other, or in any Case that most nearly concerns him. Where is the Man that hath not found his Senses have frequently deceived him? Perhaps it would make a History larger than any other extant, to give a particular Account of all the Deceptions of Mankind, with respect to the Sense of seeing: Do Men therefore turn *Scepticks* in sensible Things? Or do they neglect any

any Business of Concern, because their Senses have, and may again impose upon them? On the contrary, are they not as sure that such Objects, and such Facts are real, as they can be sure of any mathematical Demonstration, or that two and three are five? And the Reason is evident; for wherever we find ourselves imposed upon, it has been for the most Part in such Appearances as could not bide a steady Look. If Appearances have not such Stability in them, as to undergo a Trial; or if when I would examine them, or look them in the Face, they vanish, 'tis most certain there can be no Reality in them; for if real, they could not escape our Sight, and the more we view them, the more would we be satisfied of their Reality.

'Tis not to the Purpose, if it should be asked, may not one as easily make me believe he eats up a Serpent, tho' he really touch it not, as make me believe I see a Serpent in Colour and Shape and Motion, when really there is no such Thing, because I turn all upon the Permanency of the Effect? I am far from thinking the Senses can equally impose in permanent Objects and Effects, as in transient Views: And hence either a permanent Object or Work, or a permanent Destruction, or Non-appearance of an Object is, I may say, the only infallible Trial of the Senses.

Nor do I know any other *Criterion* of Certainty about sensible Objects but this; I mean all the Security of the Senses, against Illusions and Phantoms, lies in this, that I find the Object so permanent as that I can view and review it over and over; and especially, if all the Senses come in as assistant in the Business, and warrant one another; so that the Object can say, handle me and feel me; for a Phantom hath no corporeal Parts *as ye see me have*. And no other Thing but the Permanency of the Object can distinguish true and real Appearances from the Visions of the Night, or the Apparitions of a crazed Head.

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Hence it was impossible that the Spectators could be imposed upon, with Respect to the Miracles wrought by *Moses* and *Jesus Christ*, because the Effects were permanent, and the Objects of every Sense. They had Time and Leisure to examine all with the utmost Search, and had all possible Means of coming to an absolute Certainty by the Ministry of all their Senses, and the Help of their Reason too.

If any should object, that *Moses* says, expressly, *The Magicians turned their Rods into Serpents*, I'll only beg the Favour, that they'll suppose but a little with me, what I am now proving, that *Moses* turned his Rod into a Serpent, and the Magicians only deluded the Senses, how would it appear in History, if *Moses* had transmitted the Passage to this Purpose, *Aaron's* Rod became a real Serpent, and the Magicians attempting to do so, and not being able to attempt the same, they so deluded the Senses of the Spectators as that they thought the Rods became Serpents, when indeed all were *Prestigia*, Sights and Illusions. Would not this have appeared as a partial Account? Most Men would have said, all was but a Begging of the Question; why should these Serpents be thought diabolical Illusions more than the other?

'Tis evident then, that *Moses* delivers the Matter in the most unexceptionable Manner possible; whilst first, as an Historian, he speaks of Things as they appeared, and then, as an extraordinary Prophet, he demonstrates they were but Appearances; so that no Method could be more convincing, whilst without offering Violence to their Senses, or denying upon them what they thought they saw, he demonstrates, in an Appeal to their very Sight, there was no Reality in the Object, since they are made to see that *Aaron's* Rod swallowed up their Serpents.

I am far from the Opinion of those learned Men who affirm, that to impose upon the Senses of Men, is to all Intents and Purposes as true a Miracle, and as great an one, as making real Changes in the Objects them-

themselves. There needs little Power at all for the first, the Weakness of our Senses are sometimes sufficient for the same. 'Tis easier by far to make Glasses to multiply and diversify Objects, than to make as many different Objects as these Glasses represent. There is far less Power required to diversify the *Medium Visus*, and dazzle the Sense of seeing, than to produce new Beings, or make real Changes in the Objects themselves.

As to the other Things said to be done by the Magicians, as there is less Difficulty in them, so I need not stay any longer upon this Point. All the Waters were already turned into Blood, and hence the *Egyptian* Magicians could have no Water, but such a small Quantity as was digged out of the Earth. Frogs were already through all the Land of *Egypt*; and who sees not, that by Slight of Hand they might easily cheat the credulous superstitious *Egyptians*?

In a Word, I think it was easy to see, and be satisfied where the miraculous Power was lodged; particularly, I would reckon it sufficient to convince me, that no real was inflicted, if none complained of the same, or sought Relief. I would think the Power of the one real, and the Power of the other only pretended, if one Party could only remove its direful Effects. And I would think also, there was a general Conviction of this superior Power, if all the Application was made to one Side, for removing the Plagues; especially when 'tis easier to destroy Frogs than to produce them, and easier for the Magicians to turn the Blood again into Water, its first Element, than it was first to turn it out of the same.

I am sensible, that some celebrated Authors have been at some Pains to throw in several Difficulties here, to weaken the Self-evidence of Miracles; but, as I conceive, a few Things observed will easily take them off.

I readily grant there is the same Power in establishing, as in altering the Laws of Nature: As for Instance,

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stance, to cause the Sun or Earth to move, as to cause it stand still. But from this I infer a quite contrary Conclusion to the ~~fact~~ every Miracle being an altering the Laws of Matter and Motion settled by an infinite Power, the Question here is not, whether altering or establishing Nature shews the greatest Power, but which of them gives a certain Proof of a divine Mission. The Course of Nature, tho' settled and directed by infinite Wisdom and Power, yet because 'tis ordinary, can be no Indication of an extraordinary Dispensation: But if I see no less Power than what governs the Universe interpose, in an immediate Manner, and go out of its ordinary Walk, expressly to point to me some extraordinary Discovery; this gives me as much Satisfaction as I can rationally desire.

Nor am I obliged to know all the *Compages* of Nature, and see all the secret Springs thereof, before I can know what can thwart the Laws of it. 'Tis enough if I be certain of some general incontestible Laws thereof, and that I see these are over-ruled: As for Instance, I am as certain, as I can be of any Thing, that Bodies gravitate, that this Gravitation keeps together the Frame of Nature: And should I, for Instance, see Iron swim, this would be evidently inconsistent with such a known Law.

And how easily soever some may conceive, that created Spirits can raise a Stone in the Air, and suspend it there, I am sure it will be still as easy to let the said Stone down again. And what then hinders malignant Spirits from destroying all Mankind, Root and Branch?

Nothing, I suppose, can be answered to this here, but that there is a perpetual Restraint upon them. And now, what's the Difference, I beseech you, between a total Inability and a perpetual Disability to effect a Design? All Power has a Relation to some Effect to be done by that Power; and is it good Sense to tell, that one has Power to do such a Thing, and yet
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'tis never in his Power at any Time to do it? Before one should speak of an innate Power, which yet cannot possibly produce [REDACTED] Effect, he should first try if he finds any Thing in Nature to answer such a Supposition, so as to argue from an Analogy of Beings; let him shew where he should find uselefs Faculties, or Faculties that can never act; or how it consists, that any have Power to such a Work, when indeed they can never do it.

People will talk in the dark and at random, if they offer to determine about Possibilities or Impossibilities, without laying down a certain Rule to measure them by, and the surest Rule I know of is God's moral Government over the World; what's inconsistent with this is impossible. And it could not well consist with the Wisdom and Goodness of that Government, if either it should be in the Devils Powers to hold us continually in slavish Fear, by suspending Stones over our Heads; or if Powers were given to natural Agents in vain, or which they could make no use of.

But, abstracting from God's moral Government of the World, I see no Reason to affirm, that Spirits can raise a Stone into the Air, or keep Iron from sinking in Water. They may be allowed to have vast Powers, without altering the Laws of Gravitation impressed by infinite Power. Give them as much Power as you please, excepting that of disturbing the Order of the Universe, or making a new Constitution, to be conducted by new Laws. Allow them to be God's Ministers, in turning about the Wheels of Providence, yet to make a new Wheel or a new Spoke, or, in a Word, to make a new Law, is above the Compass of their Power.

Should a Man hold a Stone in the Air, he does this according to the Course of Nature: But should an Angel do so, he stops this Course and alters its Laws; why? because no Body can move, according to the Laws of Matter and Motion, but by the Impulse or Attraction of other Bodies: And no Creature

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ture can alter this Settlement, without taking down the Pins of this great Fabrick.

Yea I'll add further, Suppose that no Law, either of God's moral, or natural Government were controuled by a Spirit's immediate Interposition after this Manner, how shall any prove they have an innate Power to move any Body whatsoever?

I can suppose their Powers are larger by far than Man's, but confined to their own Province. There are innumerable Instances wherein inferior Creatures can do what Men can not. 'Tis no Disparagement to Angels to say, they cannot do animal Actions; all created Beings are limited and confined to their Province, and the material World is not the Province of Spirits, without a special divine Direction.

A Spirit in general is a penetrable Substance, and, according to the Notion of that Term, they cannot so much as touch Matter.

I find indeed my Soul move my Body, I am sensible it is not by Contact or Impulse, but by a simple Volition I can do it. But I suppose none will undertake to prove, that a pure Spirit, by a simple Volition or Command, can move one Particle of Dust.

The greatest and most inquisitive Philosophers find themselves non-plust to search the Way how our Souls move our Bodies, not being able to find out either the *Vinculum* of the Union, which if it be material, how doth it suit a Spirit? And if it be immaterial, what Hold can it take of a Body? Nor yet can they search out the Way how the Body should be affected with the Passions of the Soul, or the Soul impressed with the Motions of the Body: And hence they have resolved all this into the arbitrary Will of God.

But what Necessity is there for this, if they think a Spirit has an inherent Power to move a Body at Pleasure? Would not such an innate Power as this be sufficient to enable a Soul to unite itself to a Body, and also to keep up this Union, either eternally without Dissolution, if it thought fit, or otherwise it might retire at Pleasure.

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That is, in a Word, a Spirit is a self subsistent, immortal, penetrable Substance, and if to this it hath an innate Power of moving Bodies at Pleasure, then the Soul of Man can much more move its own Body, and, by its penetrating Power, move, direct, and conduct every Part of its own Body, so as to strengthen the Solids, and keep the Fluids in due Consistence, and keep all the Parts of it in their due Posture and Harmony, and hereby prevent for ever its Dissolution.

And yet such Spirits may be employed in the Affairs that concern us in this material World. And who knows (tho' they have no innate Power to touch Bodies) how far their inherent Powers are fitted for their several Services, through the Universe, by Reason of their vast Comprehension and Penetration, whereby they can pervade every Object, and pierce it through and through; and hence if improved *in hunc effectum*, or if by a delegated Power they are employed as God's Instruments, they may do great Things; even as we find our Souls have the Command of some Motions in our Bodies, and not of others, just so far as it pleases God and no further.

In fine, should we altogether weave any Dispute about the Powers of created Agents, particularly of malignant Spirits, the Miracles confirming revealed Religion will still shine with such Self-evidence, as is sufficient to give us all Manner of Security and Satisfaction in this Matter. We know not fully what Devils can do, but yet we know some Things they cannot do. Tho' it should be hard for us to determine about the Extent of their Power absolutely considered; yet, in a comparative Trial, we may see wherein their Power has been defective, and whole Power has been superior to theirs.

And the Trial about the Power of Miracles has been a comparative Trial; and hence the Evidence of them has been obvious to the Senses of all Beholders, since a Power has appeared confounding all opposite Powers; that is, Devils have set up
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for their Interest, by pretending to rival the Power of God, and having exerted themselves to the utmost, have been baffled, not only to the Conviction of Spectators, but to their own Confusion.

What Doubt can we now have of that Doctrine, which being attacked by Devils, is confirmed by this sure Evidence, that a Power that has visibly triumph'd over all other Powers has attested the same.

So that in receiving revealed Religion, we have this Security, which is sufficient for our Satisfaction, that we submit to the highest Power, a Power that is over the Universe, and hence can supply us with every Good in it; a Power that surmounts every other Power, and hence can baffle all the Enemies, and remove all the Obstructions of our Happiness; a Power that can raise the Dead, and hence can give us Life eternally; a Power that creates, and hence has a Right to all possible Service and Duty; in short, a Power that can make us happy in all the Measures and Degrees of Happiness we are capable of, and hence is a sufficient Object of Trust and Dependence, since infinite Power can never be separate from infinite Wisdom and Goodness; and hence if we serve the greatest Power, 'tis impossible for us to be cheated or deceived.

For who can imagine a vast incontrollable Power exerting itself infinitely, but blind and goodless? Or conceive an Almighty Strength without a directive Principle? Or that an Omnipotent Power should make and uphold the World, and then leave Chance to govern it? 'Tis easy to see the Absurdities of such an Opinion would be as monstrous as the Productions of such a Power.

So that in relying on the Evidence of Miracles, or in believing that Doctrine, for the sealing of which a Power is exerted above all other Powers, we have full Satisfaction in our Minds: We submit to the highest Power, and at the same Time to the wisest and best of Beings. And what greater Security can we

possibly have for our Souls and their everlasting Interests?

Should a modern *Deist* deny the Facts done, 'tis more than what the old Infidels had Brow to do: And by the same Rule they may deny all ancient Facts whatsoever. Eye Witnesses have transmitted these Facts to us, who did write them when that Generation was living who saw them; and hence they could not palm Stories on them that were neither thought nor wrought. The very successive Being of Christians, the Change of the Sabbath, the Confessions of Adversaries, the Disputes which the Christians had with Infidels in every Age, the Translation of the Bible into several Languages, the different Sects among Christians, their various Interests, Jars and Disputes, make it evident, that the Testimony about the Doctrine and Miracles of Christ hath been transmitted to us in a certain Conveyance.

P R O P. XXIV.

The Holy Ghost is given, according to Christ's Promise, unto his Followers.

WHat's the natural State of the rational Soul in Man? Why, 'tis averse to God, and every sensible Object runs away with it: 'Tis under the Dominion of its Passions, and a Slave to as many Masters as it has Lusts: Evil Concupiscence is ingrained in it; 'tis plunged in the animal Appetite; all its Regard is to its animal Companion; the Chains of carnal Interests and Appetite are clapt upon it, and 'tis fond of its Prison and Slavery.

And if among the Professors of Christianity there be some, especially the first Propagators and Professors of it, who have the Powers of their Souls turned upon God; if their Minds have been purged from carnal

nal Inclinations, and refined from Earth; if they have been made to mortify and renounce their Earthliness, their Pride, their Sensuality; if their Souls have been wrought into a Conformity to God, his Nature, and Image; if they have been enabled to govern their Imaginations, Senses, Appetites and Passions, and to walk in Purity, Love, Goodness, Benignity; if they have obtained an Aptitude and Disposition for Exercises and Joys that are heavenly and divine; who sees not a divine Power in all this!

That such a Change has happened on Mens Spirits, where the Gospel is preached, every sincere Christian hath the Witness in himself: That by this Christians confirm one another, their Hearts when compared answering together, *as Face answers to Face*; is no less evident: That this also may be made use of to convince Infidels of a supernatural Power attending the Gospel, is a Point I take also to be clear and evident: For if by Effects we can find a Cause, or by certain Operations we can prove a Principle, why may we not be as morally certain, that some Men walk under a vital transforming Power in the Christian Religion, as that others are animated with living Souls?

And now let us enquire, if such a Change made on the Spirit of Man (whereby the very Centre of the Heart is changed, and the Soul is made to live in another Element, and no other Objects than what ever it did before) can be brought about by any less Power than that of the Spirit of God.

Can it be Nature that raises the Soul above Nature! that is, can nature outdo itself! Can Flesh and Blood reveal Christ to the Soul, and draw it from its Vanities to submit to him, when the very Terms he requires are, that we should mortify the Flesh, and subdue its Lusts! Can the Spirit of the World, which confines the Soul to Things earthly and sensible, crucify the World, and raise the Mind above all its Pleasure and Glory!

Can Sense make such a Change in the Soul, which is rather passive than active, when conversant about its Objects, and when the chief Part of the Soul's Depravation and Misery lies in its being enveloped in the Darkeness of Sense! Or can Fancy turn the Mind to Things spiritual, when it can have no Object but what is sensible! Or can it be natural Reason which receives, if not all, yet the most Part of its Notices by Way of Sense, and can scarce see but through these Windows! Can this give us a right Perception of Things heavenly and divine, when the only right Perception of them is to see a Reality in them, and an Excellency superior to all the Objects of Sense! Or can Error, Delusion, Devils, or any evil Agents so conduct the Mind of Man, as that he shall esteem Objects according to their real Worth and proportional Excellencies!

Either the Spirit of God is the Cause of such virtuous Dispositions in the Soul, or they have no Cause at all; and so we shall have Effects without a Cause, or they have Causes worse than none.

For should it be suggested by Infidels, that all that has been said of a great Change in the Hearts and Lives of Christians, is owing to the Power of Fancy or Affectation, there cannot be any thing imagined more absurd. Are not the Persons, so wrought upon by the Gospel, as grave and judicious as any other in the World, and as capable of knowing what passes in their own Minds? Are they only a few melancholly People in a dark Corner of the World: Or are they not Millions in every Age and Place where the Gospel is preached? And, besides, are they not Persons of all Capacities and Characters, and of very different Tempers and Turns of Mind, who have found such Effects of the Gospel upon their Hearts and Lives?

And if their Principles over-ruled their Lives; if for the Sake of Christianity they did forsake the Pleasures of the Flesh, and *denied all Ungodliness*
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and worldly Lusts, and lived soberly, righteously, and godly in a present evil World; yea, if they actually sacrificed their Lives as well as their secular Interests for the Sake of the Gospel, how is it possible to have higher Evidence they were really minded as they spake?

If such Testimonies should be refused of so many Myriades of all Capacities and Tastes of Mind; and in all Ages and Places of the World; and this about a Fact so clear as the Experience of what passed in their own Minds.

If the most eminent and refined Part of Mankind, after all their Deliberations, Examining, Prayers unto God for heavenly Light, should yet be the only cheated and deluded in the World.

If Error can have such noble and heavenly Efficacy, as to enlighten and purify Souls.

If Satan, or any evil Cause, should dispose the Soul to honour, love, and obey the Lord; that is, if the worst of Beings can produce the best of Works.

If God should bless a Lie or Delusion, to be the Means of a most holy and excellent Life.

If Man should so much mistake the very Perception and Sensations of his own Mind, as that these shall prove Delusions, which yet refine and perfect the Soul in all its Powers and Faculties.

If any of these, and much more if all these should be admitted, then all Things would be confounded in God's moral Government; no Cause would be known by its Effects, and Mankind would be given up to Seduction without any possible Remedy.

In fine, as the Apostle tells us in his Epistle to the *Thessalonians*, There is in Man a Soul and a Spirit, and both of these being sanctified and renewed by the Spirit of God; hence there is in all regenerate Souls a spiritual Sense as well as a spiritual Reason: And however *Enthusiasm* may ape the first, yet it can reach to nothing of the last; that is to say, as natural Reason, tho' it receives its first Notices by the

the Senses, yet it does not confine itself to corporeal Sensations, but proceeds to its purely intellectual Operations; so in every renewed Soul the spiritual Sense first receives the Images of spiritual Objects, which the Mind makes use of as so many Vehicles of spiritual Things, or Organs whereby it comes to the grateful Perception of the spiritual Object itself: Whereas in *Enthusiasm* the Mind terminates on the Image, and confines itself to the same. 'Tis not Christ, nor any spiritual Object, but Images of them that take with the *Enthusiast*. What addresses their Imagination, and strikes their Fancy, that affects them, and makes Impression on them; but strip the spiritual Object of its Metaphor, 'tis insipid and guttless to their Minds.

But if Souls are entertained with spiritual Things, not as Phantoms, but as substantial and suitable Realities; if they are carried out to these Objects, from a free spontaneous Principle from within; if their Affections to God are even and steady, and so strong as to mortify and keep under all inordinate Desires to the Things of this Life; and if they cause them obey from the Heart what God commands, how is it possible that this should be owing only to a sensitive or fantastick Power? If this be not God's Work in the Soul, what better Work can he begin in it! What can he work in us more agreeable to his own Nature, or more perfective of ours, than such a Disposition as this, in a fuller Measure and Degree!

And what Difficulty can there be in conceiving, that the Spirit of God should reach the Spirit of Man? Why should it be thought, that the divine Fulness hath emptied all its Store upon Bodies, and hath nothing to spare for Spirits, tho' naturally dependent and necessary? And yet more is a divine Assistance necessary to raise Souls to true and solid Virtue, that are benighted in Darkness, plunged in the Flesh, and carried away with evil Passions.

There are 'tis true, many *Enthusiasts* who take a melan-

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melancholly Vapour, or a lively Imagination, for a spiritual Frame; and many Hypocrites who have high Pretences to the Spirit, and have nothing less: But should one infer, there is no such Thing as a Holy Ghost, whereby Souls are enlivened and purified, he may with equal Reason conclude, there are many Fools, therefore none are wise; there are many concealed Knaves, therefore there is not an honest Man.

And this divine Assistance being a free Gift, and not a Debt, why should the Spirit of God be taunted, because given to some, or teased, because not granted to all.

'Tis evident from what has been said, that the Holy Ghost is given to true Believers. And should we even proceed a Step further, as to believe an Union between the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of his Followers. If a *Deist* believes he has an immortal Soul, as well as an organized Body, and that there is an Union betwixt them; he shall find it a hard Task, if he own the one, to disprove the other. Can he imagine, that a Body and a Spirit can approach more near to one another, than a Spirit to a Spirit! much more than the Spirit of God can come nigh the Spirit of Man.

I have been the longer upon this Argument, because of its Use to the unlearned Christian. He cannot follow Tradition, nor trace Antiquity, he has but little Skill in natural, historical, or chronological Matters, or but small Acquaintance with the little Tricks and Arts of Wit; yet from this very Topick he is able to repel all Temptations to any Branch of Atheism, Deism, or Infidelity.

As for Instance, should any object to him, that Christ is not risen, or is not now alive. Why, says he, if Christ were not alive, how could he make me live! Live to God! live above the World! live a Life that's peculiar to a Soul. Either there is no Virtue in a Soul's living like itself, or living like an immortal

immortal Spirit, and so there is no such Thing as Virtue at all in the World; or if there is, such a good Effect must have a good Cause: And if it is Faith in Christ that gives such a spiritual and divine Turn to the Mind, then I am sure my Redeemer lives.

Or should one attempt to make the sincere Christian doubt whether there is such a Thing as Heaven, or a Seat of the Blessed in the other World; why, says he, I have heavenly Qualities and Joys already begun in me; I have a Pre-possession of Heaven; I have such a grateful Perception of the amiable Excellencies of God, and the blessed Redeemer, and such a delectable Relish of Things spiritual and divine, that if my Soul be an immortal Spirit, I cannot miss a Happiness in the other World, unless there were no God, or nothing divine to be found in it.

Yea further, from the certain Experience a sincere Christian hath of the Operation of the Holy Ghost, he can prove, that his Soul is an immortal Spirit; I find, says he, my Soul highly gratified, with such a pleasant Perception of spiritual and divine Things, as fills it with ardent Desires of more and more, even unto perfect and eternal Fruition: And how could Sense, or a mere animal Nature, discern spiritual Objects, when the only true Discernment of them is to distinguish them from all that is sensible or animal? And wherefore would the all-wise God implant such a Power and Appetite, if he had no Mind to satisfy the same? I find an agreeable Pleasure in Objects, for which the Soul owes nothing to the Body: And as hereby I find my Soul has no natural or physical Incapacity of subsisting in a separate State; so on the other hand, I feel such a Power, which, if gratified, can not only live, but live happily in a future State. And why should it be admitted in Man, which takes Place in none other of God's Works, to have Power given him in vain? Who can believe such a Thing of God, who doth all Things in infinite Wisdom and Goodness, that he hath so framed Man, as that the best Thing

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Thing about him, I mean his best Disposition, and most refined Pleasure, and what qualifies him for the best Actions and Purposes, shall all be owing to a fantastick Principle within! Shall so great Good come out of so great Evil as Ignorance and Error!

Thus we have offered a short Method with Infidels, by laying down some Principles, which, if established, do sap the Foundations of some of their voluminous Writings.

I conclude with a short Improvement.

Ye see the Character given by the Apostle of a faithful Minister; he must *hold fast the faithful Word*. And now,

1. Let us hold fast the Truths of the Gospel; particularly let us hold that our Natures are miserably depraved; that if God *should enter into judgment with us, we cannot answer for one of a thousand*; that there is an absolute Necessity of regenerating and sanctifying Grace; that we must not only be mercised but justified, in order to eternal Life; that besides Pardon, there is a Necessity of a Surety-righteousness, to deliver us from our Judge, and entitle us to the great Blessings of his Love; that the Main of Religion consists in *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ*, in Self-denial and Humility, in supreme Love to God, and the blessed Jesus, in crucifying the World and mortifying the Flesh, in Resignation to the divine Will, and universal Holiness and Righteousness in Heart and Life, &c.

2. Let us hold forth the Word faithfully to all that hear us, so as to avoid all Extremes on the right Hand and on the left. Let us so preach the Gospel, as that Presumption may not be taken for Faith, nor Distrust for Humility; that lumpish Uncheerfulness may not be taken for Gospel-Sorrow, nor a trifling Levity of Spirit for spiritual Cheerfulness; that Lukewarmness in Religion may not be taken for Christian

Modera-

Moderation, nor unhallowed Anger and Contention for holy Zeal.

There are many Rocks on which many Souls that hear the Gospel are split. Some think all Religion consists in some external Observances, without any spiritual Frame; others apprehend they shall be saved because of some good Meaning in them, tho' they have never a Heart to do any Good: Some think it enough to admit some Conviction of Sin, and feel some Regret for the same, tho' they never amend their Ways, as if they expected Pardon was to be a Remitting of their Duty, instead of a Remitting of their Sin: Others again conceit they may live very good Lives, tho' they never had any serious Sense of the Evil of Sin, nor any humble Contrition for the same. Some again think, they can believe well tho' they do not live well, as if Faith did not apply Christ for *Wisdom, Sanctification and Redemption*; or as if Faith was not a Submitting to Christ as a Prince, as well as an Admitting him as a Saviour: Others again go about to *establish their own Righteousness, not submitting to the Righteousness of Faith*; or they set about good Works, without the very first constituent Principles of them, I mean Faith in the Lord Jesus, and a sincere Love, like a Man's attempting to build a Superstructure of a House, without laying the Foundation: Some again fancy they can be religious towards God, tho' unrighteous towards Men: And others, that the All or the Main of Religion lies in social Virtues. And as these are fatal Mistakes about what concerns the eternal Interests of our precious Souls, so we are, with the utmost Caution, to guard our People against them. And for this End let us bear it much in our Minds, that if we give them not faithful Warning, their Blood God will require at our Hands, *Ezek. iii.*

May he who is given of the Father to be a Leader unto his People, lead us into all Truth and Holiness. *Amen.*

A

SUPPLEMENT

T O

PROPOSITION IV.

SINCE this *Manual* was sent to the Press, I have read a Sermon of *the Happiness of God*, which seems to contain some Notions not consistent with this Proposition.

That Sermon deserves a particular Consideration; but in regard it was some Days after I had the first Sheet of this to be revised from the Press, before I had a Thought of adding this Supplement, I can do little more than tell that reverend Brother wherein I differ from him.

It is my Opinion that God's fixed permanent View of his own infinite Excellencies is sufficient to make him infinitely happy, tho' no Creature had ever been made, nor any Purpose about them; and that as we cannot profit the Almighty by our Righteousness, so as little by our Make.

I think that if God contemplates himself, this Contemplation is an active, operative Thing; that is, I think that Contemplation is an Exercise of the Mind, and if God has a Complacency in himself, this also is active, since a Joy merely passive is a Contradiction; so that God need not go out of himself for Pleasure.

'Tis not well argued, " That God cannot have an
 " infinite Complacency in the Contemplation of his
 " Nature

“ Nature and Perfections, because he can find no-
 “ thing new or surprizing.” Strange! cannot infinite
 Perfection be sufficient to afford infinite Contentment!
 What would infinite Perfection itself be good for, if
 it did not furnish a Delight proportioned to the Per-
 fection?

What is new and surprizing will be entertaining to
 us, and the more desultory our Minds are, we will
 be the rather affected with Things new than with
 Things excellent; but shall it be so said of the al-
 wise God! The Reason why Things cast up new
 and surprizing to us is the Finiteness of our Capa-
 city; we cannot take in Things at once; but what
 can be imagined surprizing or new to an infinite
 Mind?

’Tis certainly an Oversight to think, that “ God’s
 “ fixed and continuing Contemplation of himself
 “ would evidently imply new Discoveries.” What,
 may we not delightfully contemplate what we alrea-
 dy know? Do not all happy Beings find a Delight
 in so doing? Is it the Newness or the Excellency of
 an Object that makes the Contemplation thereof plea-
 sant! Were not all Things known to him from the
 Beginning! If by Admiration is meant a Discovery of
 any Thing new and surprizing, unless he be thought
 capable of an additional Happiness, it can have no
 Place in the infinite Mind. But may not a fixed
 Contemplation of an inexhaustible Fund of infinite
 Excellencies, be as conducive to Pleasure as gradual
 Discoveries, which therefore may be surprizing?

I am not of the reverend Author’s Mind, “ That
 “ the Happiness of God doth arise more especially
 “ from his employing his infinite Mind in forming
 “ Plans of many and excellent Worlds, than in that
 “ unspeakable and inconceivable Satisfaction which
 “ he has in himself from his excellent Nature and glo-
 “ rious Perfections.” For if this does not suppose
 the World to be from Eternity, as being as necessa-
 ry as the Happiness of God; it at least supposes, that
 the

the divine Happiness would have consisted more in Plans and Projects about what might never be, than in the Contemplation of what might never be, or even in the Contemplation of himself who eternally is. But still, unless he take a long Eternity to be always advising and considering what is best, and new Ideas cast up in his Mind, and Discoveries made to him, there can be no Place for that Kind of Admiration which the Author makes essentially requisite to the divine Happiness.

Man, he forms a Plan of his Work before he puts Hand to it; but the *Eternal*, he thinks, and immediately all the possible Ways of communicating, or representing himself, appear before him, and what is to be done is done in the Order he conceives it, by the same Act, without any Succession or operose Labour; and what new Thing can occur to his Mind?

And what the reverend Author means by saying, That "in some Sense the World and the Fulness thereof flows necessarily from God, as a Being of immense Goodness, which is always communicating itself for the Benefit of others," I cannot divine. I do not think he believes the World to be eternal, because he tells once and again, that God needed not have created us. But then, how what flows necessarily from God can be yet conceived not as flowing eternally from him, or how a Being hath been always communicative of itself for the Benefit of others, if any Instant of Duration can be assigned wherein these others are not existent, or wherein there was no other than himself, will be a Difficulty transcending all Reason.

'Tis certain God takes Pleasure in his Works, or rather in the noble and free Effort of his Perfections, in creating the World, and all the Orders of Intelligencies in it; but to say he could not be happy without them, is to make that an Argument of Indigence which is owing to a free beneficent Will.

If nothing created can be God's highest End, as little can it be his highest Pleasure; and if cannot be his highest Pleasure, neither can any Exercise of the divine Mind about the Creature be so; since the Pleasure of a Production must in some Measure correspond to the Excellency of the Thing produced, or at least to the Benefit that may accrue thereby to the Producer.

But I come to the Point for which Sake I have made this Supplement. I had laid it down as a Principle, that *God is not any one Attribute singly considered*, there being an infinite University of all Perfections eminently in him. And (as I take it) this Proposition and our Author's Reasoning will not well accord together.

I shall not stand upon that Proof of the Immortality of the Soul, which he takes from the Happiness of God, which he thinks lies in Action about the Creatures, and hence subsumes, "If the divine Happiness be continued, then Action, (*meaning about his Creatures*) from whence it flows, must be continued likewise." I say, I do not stay upon this, tho' perhaps some may alledge, and not un-
plausibly, that by this Argument for the Immortality of the Soul, one may prove the eternal Existence of every Thing else in their particular Beings and Forms, and especially the eternal Existence of all animate Creatures, tho' we see their Rise and Fall every Day, since there is a divine Action about them also.

What I touch upon is his Manner of proving the Immortality of the Soul from the Goodness of God. The Argument is after this Form; "'Tis owing to the Goodness of our God, and his generous Design of imparting it, that he gave intelligent Beings an actual Existence—And if Goodness communicated and imparted to others is the proper and genuine Proof of a good Being from whence it comes, then it will naturally follow, that the

" more

“ more lasting and abiding that Goodness is which
 “ denominates one Good, of Necessity it must give
 “ a clearer Display of the Goodness of its Author.”
 But here I would ask, what Immortality is here
 meant? If the Argument have any Strength at all, it
 must infer a blessed Immortality to all and every one
 of intelligent Beings, Devils themselves not excepted,
 since eternal Misery cannot be said to be an Effect
 of infinite Goodness to the eternally miserable: And
 this would be a Scheme as inconsistent with the Religion
 of Nature (which teaches a future Retribution of
 Punishments and Rewards in the other World) as with
 the sacred Oracles of God. Besides, if I can be allowed
 to borrow his Premises, I may prove, with like Evidence,
 that every Creature must be as happy in every Moment
 of Time as divine Power, which is subservient to divine
 Goodness, can make it. 'Tis but forming the Argument
 after the same Manner with our Author, *viz.* Goodness
 communicated and imparted to others is the genuine and
 proper Proof of a good Being from whence it comes;
 and it follows from this, that the greater Measure of
 Goodness that is communicated, must give a clearer
 Display of the Goodness of the Author; and 'tis certain,
 that to make all his Creatures at all Times most happy,
 and in every Circumstance, would be the brightest
 Display of Goodness. Such is the strange Reasoning of
 conceiving God as only one Attribute!

I think indeed a good Man may prove an immortal
 happy Life to himself from what he feels; he finds an
 ardent Desire in himself to an intimate and eternal
 Intercourse with *the Father of Spirits*, and he feels a
 Delight in God superior to any Satisfaction he can
 have in the Things of this Life; and he may safely
 conclude, if all the Creatures Desires to any suitable
 Good are satisfied, those shall not be only excepted,
 that are directed to God himself; or he may reason,
 if God implants, and not in vain, every natural or
 rational Appetite in his Creatures, that a

Desire to himself cannot be the only Appetite that is not of God's planting, or the only Appetite which he will frustrate, as having made it in vain: Or he may think, that if he has Experience of pure and more satisfying Delights than what this Earth can afford, that 'tis impossible he can be staked down to an earthly Felicity as his final Happiness; that is to say, when all other Creatures have their Ends commensurate to their Capacities, it cannot be imagined, that Man, and especially the most virtuous, should be endued with Faculties that over-match their End, which could serve to no Purpose but to make the best the most miserable.

But what is all this to the whole Bulk of Mankind, or what Security have they for a blessed Immortality, when God owes it to his Justice to punish the Guilty, and when his Goodness itself, as well as Wisdom and Justice, requires he should connect a natural with a moral Evil?

I am far from fixing the Consequences before-mentioned on my reverend Brother, as if they were his Principles. My Design is only to shew, that how arrogantly soever Man's Reason may presume to comprehend every Thing, (the divine Felicity not excepted) that yet our natural Understanding is wrapt in such Darkness, that should we leave the Scriptures and follow its Conduct, we will soon find ourselves in a Maze of Perplexities, and manifestly blunder. And again, my Design is to shew, that the conceiving of God as if he were only one Attribute, or as if one of his Perfections were more his Darling than the rest, has, and will be a Source of infinite Errors.

We cannot do better than take our Principles from the divine Word. 'Tis safest for us to rest in scriptural Accounts, at least we ought to believe what we daily see manifest in the Works of God, *viz.* That God is infinite in all his Excellencies; that he could have been infinitely happy without us, and without
any

any Creature, or even any Purpose about them: that yet it was for his Glory to make them, not to add to his Happiness, for he was ever happy in his own supreme Felicity, but to declare the Excellencies that are infinitely in him; that having made Man a reasonable Creature, he could not but make him a free Agent, that is capable of preferring and chusing; that Man having chosen to turn away his Mind from the Contemplation of God, he fell from him, and hereby is brought into a State of Rebellion; that having thereby forfeited the Favour of God, and incurred his Displeasure, without a supervening Law of Grace submitted to by Man, he has no Right to Life; on the contrary, Justice requires that he should eternally suffer what is worse than Non-being: And hence in God's moral Government he is seen in the Splendor of all his divine Excellencies, to the eternal Joy of all the Angels and loyal Spirits, whether they be in Heaven or Earth.

F I N I S.



CHRIST
THE
POWER of GOD,
AND THE
WISDOM of GOD.

A
SERMON

Preached at the opening of the
Synod of MERSE and TIVI-
OTDALE, OCTOBER 20th,
M. DCC. XXX.

By Mr. WILLIAM CRAWFURD, Minister of the
Gospel at WILTOWN.

EDINBURGH:
Printed in the Year M.DCC.XLVIII.

READER,

I Little thought of publishing this Discourse, till several of my Reverend Brethren, whose Judgment I trust to more than mine own, advised me to the same. I am sensible the good Design is the most acceptable Part thereof; And I hope for the same Candour from all, who are well affected to the Purposes here contained. The Sermon is more full than what was discoursed in Publick: Partly because I would not take up the Synod's Time, in delivering that I had conceived upon the Subject; and partly because in revising it for the Press, I found it needful to add a few Thoughts, for the clearing of some Points. May the LORD bless it for the Edification of Souls. Amen.



1. COR. i. 23, 24.

We preach — Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.

THAT the Jews expected their *Messias* to be the *Power of God*, is evident from *Isa. ix. 6. Unto us a Son is given, and the Government shall be upon his Shoulders, and His Name shall be called the Mighty God.* And *Psal. lxxxix. 19. I have laid Help upon one that is Mighty.* And perhaps the *Samaritans*, who had the same Expectation with the *Jews*, had a Respect to this, when they called *Simon Magus* the *Great Power of God.* *Act. viii. 10.* And that the *Messias* was also promised and expected, as the *Wisdom of God*, is evident from the whole eighth Chapter of the *Proverbs*:

Hence says the Apostle, *We Preach the Messias the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* So I would choose to read it; for the Word *CHRIST*, doth not now form the same Idea it did in the Days of the Apostles: People now looking upon it as a *Proper Name*, whereas it signifies a particular *Dignity, Office and Employment*, while the Term *Messias* hath always kept its natural Signification. *We Preach the Messias to Jews and Gentiles, Who is the Immanuel, who from ancient Times hath chosen the Gentiles to hear and believe the Word of the Gospel, as well as the Jews.* So I humbly conceive, that Passage *Act. xv. 7.* should be rendered * And tho' neither *Rome* nor *Athens*

* My Reasons are, 1. *Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν* is the express Interpretation of *Immanuel*, whether we consider *ἐν* in its natural Signification, or take it for *μετα*, as is usual. 2. It gives a very low Sense of *ἡμετέραν ἀρχαίαν*, and which the Words, according

Athens should stoop to him: Tho' the *Jews*, thro' a fond Conceit of a *Temporal Saviour*, should despise him: Tho' all the *Conceited*, and all the *Bigotted*: Tho' all the *Proud*, and all the *Prophane* should inwardly in their Hearts, or outwardly with their Lips, contemn and deride *Salvation* by a *Crucified Saviour*; yet we Preach *Jesus of Nazareth crucified*, to be the true *Messias*, who is the *Power* of God and the *Wisdom* of God.

In discoursing upon this, through Divine Assistance, we shall endeavour to show, First, some *Instances*, wherein Ministers of the Gospel Preach *Christ* as the *Power* of God. Secondly, some *Instances*, wherein they Preach *Christ* as the *Wisdom* of God. And, lastly, conclude with a few Inferences.

First, In what *Instances* Ministers of the Gospel preach *Christ* as the *Power* of God.

First, We preach *Christ the Power of God in emptying* * *himself*, *Phil. ii. 7, of the Splendor and Effulgency of the Divine Nature*: Or, of the actual *Display* and *Irradiation* of his *Glory*: Or whatever it was, it was some *Glory*, which he had with his Father, before the World was, *Jo. xvii. 8*. This, one would think, were more hard and difficult, than for the Sun to abstract his Beams; That *Sadness* and *Grief* should enter into the very Seat of *Light* and *Joy*; That the *Light* of the World should be in an Hour of *Darkness*; That he, who was girt with *Omnipotence*, should suffer the Pains of *Death*: This was not an Act of *Weakness*, but of the *Power* of God, as shall afterwards appear: Or, at least, we may apply

according to any Authority I know of, cannot bear, to commence them from the Conversion of *Cornelius*, which was only about eleven Years before. *Δια τὴν σωματίους μου*, may be considered either in Parenthesis. *i. e.* fulfilled by my Mouth, or may be contained in *ἐξελεξατο*, for a Prophecie, or a Decree about an End, includes also the Means.

* *ἐκένωσε*

ply here what the Apostle says in the following Verse. That *the Weakness of God is stronger than Men.*

And what can be more evident than that Christ's assuming of the Human Nature, and his uniting of it to himself in a personal Union, was an Instance of *God-like Power* in him, *Heb. ii. 14. He took Part in our Nature,* and *v. 16. He took on him the Seed of Abraham.* Which as it shews that he *was* before he took it; so also that it was by his own *Active Power*: And by it, his eternal Power and God-head are clearly to be seen. For if a vital Union between an immortal Spirit and Piece of Earth, or a Lump of Flesh in Man, be a Thing so wonderful, as that there is no accounting for the same, but by resolving it into the supreme Power and Will of God; much more a personal Union, between what we shall call, at this Time, a super-angelick Nature, and the Nature of Man. And since this super-angelick Person had an active Hand in the Business, that is, not only *was* before this Conjunction of himself with our Nature, but also the very *Assumer* of it, and that into a personal Union with himself: This evidently demonstrates, that not only *He was of old, even from everlasting,* but also that the infinite Power of God is in him. Where was it ever heard, that the Soul did take to itself a Body, or take on itself a Body? The *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists*, who held even the Pre-existence and Transmigration of Souls, yet never spoke at this Rate, nor dreamed of the same, but spoke of Souls being detruded into Bodies or imprisoned in them, and so looked upon their Souls as being only passive in this Matter. And 'tis certain, that *Passives* only would be proper here, were there nothing but a created Power.

2dly, We Preach Christ the Power of God in his working of Miracles, *Jo. v. 38.* I do not stay to describe the Nature and Evidence of a Miracle. I call it, in general, a *stupenduous Work of Power, wherein the Finger of God is clearly to be seen.* If any shall offer

a lower *Idea* thereof, as signifying any *Work*, therefore called *extraordinary*, because above the *Capacity* and *Agency* of Men, and hereby darken the *Evidence* of a true *Miracle*: all I shall observe is, that this would be a *Notion* of it so low, as not to reach the *Particulars* in *Question*: Since however God may allow *Angels* to be *Agents*, in *Affairs* that can be done, without the *Interposition* of an infinite Power, yet the *Works* done by our Saviour, either as to the *Matter* or *Manner* of them, were so *mighty*, that no *Man* could do them, unless God were with him, Jo. iii. 2.

And 'tis strang', how any should imagine, that *Satan's* lying *Signs* and *Wonders* do darken the *Evidence* of *Miracles*. For, is it true in *Fact*, that God hath not confirmed his *Revelation*, by an *extraordinary Work*, but what Satan hath equalled, in the confirming of *Error*? Or is it well argued, that God cannot by any *Extraordinary Work*, that surmounts the Power of all created *Beings*, give sufficient *proof* of a *Divine Miracle*, if Satan can effect some *Things* in Favour of *Error*, which surpasses the Power and Knowledge of *Man*? Or has not a *Man* sufficient *Reason* to determine him to embrace a *Doctrine* as *Truth*, if two contrary *Powers* work each of them *extraordinary Facts*, when the one makes it evident from the *Nature*, *Number* and *Greatness* of his *Works*, that he infinitely excels the other, in *Power* *Wisdom* and *Goodness*? Or, would this *Argument* be *conclusive*, *Weak Mortals* know not how far *Created Agents*, and particularly *Evil Powers*, may effect what appears to them above *Natural Causes*, or for which they can give no *natural Reason*; therefore the *Finger of God* can never be seen in any *Work*? Who sees not the *Absurdity* of this *Kind of Reasoning*? What *Difficulty* is there in conceiving that a *Greater Power* should confound a *Lesser*? Or, what *Place* is there for *Suspence*, when we see this actually done? Tho' I know not how far the *Power of Nature* may extend, yet may I not be infallibly

infallibly certain, that there are some Things beyond its Reach? I know not but some one Man, by a certain Elasticity, or a previous Management of his Body may be able to jump several Ells in Height, but may I not be sure enough, that he cannot jump above the Moon? We might expose the Absurdity of this Kind of Reasoning in many Instances, could we stay upon it.

What I mean by all this is, That I would have the *Miracles* stand as a certain *Proof* by themselves of a *Divine Mission*, distinct from the *Doctrine*, tho' the two together cast Light *mutually* upon one another.

I am surprized to find in some of our Modern Writers the Evidence of Miracles denyed, on this slender Pretext, that they are *Evidences* of the *Power*, but not of the *Veracity* of the *Being* that works them, and consequently may attend a *Lie*. Who did ever imagine, that *Infinite Power* and *Infinite Veracity* could be seated in different *Subjects*, or that being in the same *Subject*, they can ever *clash* with one another? Can I ever be more sure of any Proposition than this, *Where there is an Infinity of Power, there must be necessarily an Infinity of all Perfections; and hence that 'tis impossible, that an Infinite Power can confirm a Lie, or stablsh a Vice?* If therefore I am infallibly assured, that an *Infinite Power* hath interponed to attest such a *Doctrine*, however incredible the said *Doctrine* should appear to *Reason*, I am bound to believe it. Why? Because no Moral or Theological Truth can be more certain than this, (yea the *Certainty* of of all *Natural*, as well as *Revealed* Religion depends upon it) that *Infinite Power* can never interfere with *Infinite Veracity*, or *Infinite Goodness*: Or, *that God can never be against himself*. And who can think it an excessive *Humility*, or *Abnegation* of his *Understanding* to submit it, as well as his *Will*, to the *Mind* and *Will* of God; If he hath but so much *Faith*, or even to much *Reason* as to believe, that God is as much *Wiser*, as he is more *Powerful* than *Men*?

Thirdly, We preach Christ the Power of God in raising himself from the Dead, Jo. ii. 19. Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up. Jo. x. 18. I have Power to lay down my Life, and Power to take it up again. Thousands of Deaths could not overcome him. Mountains of Brass could not hold him down. He rose again, and who but the Prince of Life could have done so?

The *soldiers* said His *Disciples* took him away by Night, when they were *asleep*. The *Apostles* said They were *Eye-witnesses* of his being *risen*: And which of the two should be believed, will easily appear. For,

1. Who could be most *certain*? Those who attested the *Affirmative*, or those who attested only the *Negative*? The Persons that told what was done, when they were *asleep*, and so could not see it nor know it; Or those who told what they saw, when *awake*?

2. Who were most *disinterested* in their Testimony? The *Chief Priests*, who by their admitting *Jesus Christ* for their *Messias*, saw they were to lose the Grandeur both of their *Church* and *State*, Jo. xi. 48. Or the *Apostles*, who saw that if *Christ* was not *risen*, they sacrificed their Credit, Ease, Fortunes, Lives, Souls, and eternal Happiness for *Nothing*? For if *Christ* was not *risen*, then both in Time and Eternity, of all Men they were most miserable.

This is an Argument so posing, that *Vaninus*, after the most accurate Search, that so shrewd an Adversary could make, was forc'd to give up this Point, not being able to charge *Christ Jesus*, or his *Disciples* with any *Secular Design*, or *Interest*.

The Modern *Infidels* turn it upon *Ambition*: The plain Meaning of which, is, that Men are *ambitious* of Disgrace, for *Disgrace's Sake*, and of Misery for *Misery's Sake*: A Supposition so *unnatural*, that the very Terms over-throw one another. Or, they put it on *Revenge*, which is, as if one should say, a Man in Pursuit

Pursuit of *Revenge*, which he knows will be altogether impotent and vain, will be at the utmost Pains, and undergo all Manner of Difficulties, in doing what he sees infallibly bringing the *Vengeance* of God and Men, Heaven and Earth, upon *himself*: Which would be such a Piece of extreme Dottage, that if it can be *supposeable* in the Apostles, yet sure was never to be found in any *Set* of Men, nor shall ever be found in any after them, being inconsistent with the *Principles* of Self preservation, rooted in the *Human Nature*.

And, what can more strongly confirm us in the sure Belief of *Christ's Resurrection*, and all the other *Credentials* of his *Divine Mission*, than the perverse *Disputings* of Men destitute of the Truth?

They suppose the Apostles had Reason to be *partial* in their Testimony concerning *Christ*, tho' if they were not sure of the Truth of what they delivered of him, they were sure of Disgrace, Pain and Loss in this World, and inevitable Damnation in the World to come.

They suppose, that Men not *distracted* or *bereft* of their *Wits*, would think it safe to entrust the grand Secret of an *Imposture* to many hundreds of all Sexes, Capacities and Characters: And that no Torments could ever force so much as one of them to own the *Imposture*.

Some of them would be thought good Christians, tho' 'tis evident from their charging Christ Jesus with Imposture, that they are far from coming the Length of *Judas Iscariot*, who could not have so much Jealousie of a Cheat in this Matter, as could save him from hanging himself: And hence he pronounces Christ to be an innocent Person.

They argue in Favours of the *Devil*, as if in the Apostles Days he had more of the *Fool* than of the *Knave*; Or rather had altogether *undevild* himself, by promoting a Doctrine that pulls down his Kingdom.

They represent Men as so *unhappy Beings*, as to be under a Necessity of being imposed upon: Since

a great Multitude of Persons, sober, judicious and inquisitive, are supposed not only freely to forsake their former *Persuasions*, but also to deny their former *Satisfactions*; and for no Purpose, but that they may *resolutely be undone*.

They argue, as if *transient Views* were more certain and probative, than *permanent Views* and *Effects*: That is, had they been present with the *Witch of Endor*, and seen a Judge, like *Samuel*, come up from the Earth, this they would have believed to be a true Resurrection, but if they had not been present to see this, tho' *Samuel* should have often appeared to the *Sons of the Prophets*, to the full Satisfaction of all their Senses, of Seeing, Hearing, Feeling, &c. yea left a *double Portion* of his Spirit upon them; all this would be no Proof to them of *Samuel's Resurrection*.

They reject all the *Evidence of Testimony*, and deny *God Almighty* to give them Satisfaction in this Particular; the Tendency of their Argument amounting to this, *If Jesus appeared to many Hundreds, whereby they were most certain of his Resurrection, and through all Hazards became his Followers, then they are Parties, and their Testimony is not to be regarded*: And, at the same Time, if he affords not that Evidence to others, they want, as they think, sufficient *Credentials*: And so however it is they are resolved against *Believing*.

They deny the Apostles wrought any Miracles; And yet they believe, they persuaded Men of *Facts*, as actually done in their Sight, which every Man's Eyes and Senses did contradict: When yet if they did this, it was a Miracle with a *Witness*, or rather with a *Vengeance*: For to cheat all the Senses of Mankind at once, exceeds all the Powers of *Hell*.

Or they say, These *Facts* were invented sometime after, when the Men of that Generation, wherein the Things were said and done, were all dead and gone: That is, they suppose some, in an *After-age*,
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did assure the Generation then living, that *Jesus Christ* had wrought such extraordinary Facts, and as a certain Proof of this, had instituted *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, and other publick Documents, as Memorials of these Things; all which had been observed without Interruption from the Time of *Jesus Christ*, in Testimony whereof some of themselves had been at the *Supper*, and their Children were *baptized*: All this they persuaded them of, when at the same Time that Generation knew most certainly, that no such Thing was ever believed, or so much as heard among them. This again would be a Miracle greater than any *Devil* in *Hell* can work, unless he can first turn People mad.

They deny that God has a *Power* to work Miracles: Their Arguments for the most Part amounting to this, That either a natural Cause can be assigned for such an *Effect*, and so 'tis no Miracle; or, it cannot, and so 'tis not credible. And so their Argument is, *There are no Miracles, because there can be none*: That is, they are sure enough that divine Power can do nothing above their *Reach*.

They value their *Wit*, because of their *Unbelief*, and yet they believe: Greater Paradoxes than a Christian can believe; particularly, among many Instances, that there may be such a *Jumble* and *Confusion* of Causes and Effects, as that Causes can neither be known by their Effects, nor Effects prognosticate by their Causes; but the *worst* of Causes may produce the *best* of Effects; that is, they suppose a Religion to be so good and perfect, that no Supplement can be made to it, and yet the first Author and Publishers of it, to be wicked Impostors; the Religion the best that can be, and yet the Revealers of it to be Cheats. This is a Pitch or a Kind of Faith, that no Christian can ever attain unto. He could sooner believe that Heaven shall shake out all its glorious Inhabitants, and run with Earth into their old *Chaos*, than believe such a Thing to be possible.

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And now I would ask, Is it well done in any Man, that has the least Pretention to Humanity, to put such a horrible Affront on the Understanding of his Fellow Creatures, as to think that any in the World, for the Sake of such miserable *Inconsistencies*, will forsake a Religion, that is so illustrative of God's moral Excellencies, and so adapted to the Nature and present Circumstances of Men; and which is confessed by its Adversaries to be good, useful, and conform to the Law and Religion of Nature?

Fourthly, We preach *Christ the Power of God in saving us*, Marth. i. 21. *Thou shalt call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his People from their Sins.* And, 1 *Thess.* i. 10. We are told, that *Jesus delivers us from the Wrath to come.* And how? Is it by Way of Satisfaction? But what finite Power can make a full Satisfaction for the infinite Dishonour and Injury Sin hath done unto God? And any Thing less than a full Satisfaction, is infinitely less; and so 'tis as good as none. Or, is it by way of Purchase? But who can buy Souls, but He that can claim them as his own, and dare assert his Dominion over them; which is God's sole Prerogative? Or, is it by Way of proper Efficiency, in delivering us from the Hands of our Enemies? But as Sin makes us fall into the Hands of a *living God*, what Creature in Heaven or in Earth, who among Angels or among Men, can deliver us again from his Hand? No less than an increased Power can deliver us from the *Wrath to come.* Who but God could accomplish so difficult an *Enterprise* as the Salvation of Man, and surmount so many Difficulties as opposed themselves to the same? Who could deliver us from eternal Death, but the *Author and Prince of Life*? Who could purge our Consciences from the Impurities of Sin, and the Uneasiness of Guilt, but He, who, as he is the *King of Nations*, so also, in a particular Manner, *the King of Saints*? None can save us, but He that made us. The Salvation of Mankind being certainly as divine a Work,

as the Creation of the World. We must necessarily believe, that no less than a divine Power is in Christ, else how can we believe He is able to save us from the Demerit of Sin, and the Wrath of God. This being more than any, or all the Creatures in the World are able to do. And this leads us to other Points, which are but the Amplification of this.

Fifthly, We preach *Christ the Power of God in satisfying divine Justice for us. He himself bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, 1 Pet. i. 24. He suffered, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18.* The Man that believes the *Holiness* of God, the very *Foundation* I may call it of his *God-like Bliss*, and of the infinite Contentment he hath in himself, which carries in it a perfect Detestation of Sin, and inclines him to animadvert with Severity against it: And the Man that believes the *Justice* of God, and that there is no Justice more necessary or more essential to him, than what he owes unto himself; and that in this respect, he hath not any Right he can part with; he cannot part with his Sovereignty and Rectorship of the World, more than part with his Being: And the Men that believes, that 'tis *God-like* in him to do what becomes him, that is, to let it be seen, how sacred the *Rights* of his Government are, and how horrid a Thing it is for a silly Worm to be ill affected to the very *Being* and *Blessedness* of God: That Man must believe, that there is a Necessity of *Satisfaction* for the Indignity done unto God, before the rebellious Sinner can be restored unto his Favour. I wonder not that the Doctrines of the Deity, Incarnation and Satisfaction of the Son of God, should stand and fall together, since it would puzzle a Man to find any End lower than this, worthy of the *Incarnation*, not to say, the *Sufferings* of the Son of God. For it appears to be little less than a Contradiction, to own the Son of God, his coming down in our Nature, and yet deny the only assignable, at least, the

the most adequate End of his Incarnation and Passion. We are absolutely to believe the Unity of the God-head, but as *Simplicity* is not a scriptural Attribute of him, so 'tis owned from the Principles, both of natural and revealed Religion, that an *omnimodus* Simplicity would be no Perfection. It is not against Reason then, to conceive such a Distinction in the Deity, as admits of the Incarnation of the one without the other: So that it shall not be the same Person that satisfies and receives the Satisfaction. Suppose Mankind had in a particular Manner invaded the Rights of the Angels, and that a Satisfaction became necessary, else never more to be any Coalition together: Suppose again, one of the Angels, able to make the Satisfaction, should assume the human Nature, and in it suffer and perform whatever was necessary, as an EQUIVALENT: Who could deny this to be a true and proper Satisfaction? I know no *Simile* can come up to this Mystery; and no Wonder, since all that is in God, is *incomprehensible*: As *Tertullian* says, *I would not worship that God I could comprehend.*

Hence, we preach *Christ the Power of God* in satisfying for our Sins. And what other Power could translate, on his own innocent *Self*, the infinite Weight of our Sins, a Burden that would have broken the Back of the strongest Angels, and crack'd the Axle-tree of Heaven and Earth? What other Power could bear him up, and cause him elucitate from under the divine Wrath? And what other Power could make him overcome in our very Nature, Devils, Powers, and Principalities of Darkness?

Sixthly, We preach *Christ the Power of God* in enlightening dark Minds. He came as a *Light into the World*, John. xii. 46. He sent the Gospel to open *Mens Eyes*, and to turn them from *Darkness to Light*, Act. xxvi. 18. Any moral Suasion, or setting forth of the Object, can no more give Light to a dark Mind, than the Beams of the Sun can give Light to a Man
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born blind. He not only reveals the Object, but by a *physical Agency*, so I must call it for Want of a better Term, he clears, illustrates and spiritualizeth the intellectual Powers: And no less Power than the Power of God, can effect this. 'Tis only he that *commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, that shines in our Hearts to give us the Light of the Glory of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Whereby a Man is brought into a *new World*, and finds himself beset with new Wonders. For tho' the unenlightened may apprehend the same Objects, with the enlightened, yet they have not the same Apprehensions of them; there are many Peculiarities, which gracious Souls perceive. Yea, I think it may be questioned, whether the Unregenerate apprehend the same Objects. The Business seems to be this, spiritual Things are described under sensible Metaphors, and corporeal Images, and their Knowledge terminates only on the *sensible Image*, but the *spiritual Thing* they do not discern, 1 Cor. ii. 14. We might shew this in all their Conceptions of spiritual Objects, but we shall hold with *one*, as comprehensive of all the rest; and that is, Their Apprehension of *Heaven*. What more usual than for the unholy and unrighteous to be hoping for Heaven? What is Heaven? 'Tis a State of perfect Freedom from Sin, perfect Holiness, perfect Conformity to the Nature and Image of God. Is this the Heaven that such ungodly Souls are hoping for? Are they hoping for the perfect Holiness in Heaven, who hate the imperfect Holiness on Earth? Are they hoping to have that perfected, which they cannot endure should ever be begun? All is Contradiction. 'Tis not Heaven that such hope for, but some false Conceit of it, some Fool's Paradise, some Castle built in the Air, some Elysian Fields, or some confused Notion of a Happiness in general, without knowing wherein it consists; or, perhaps, 'tis some dark Territories, which, tho' they please better than the black Regions of Hell, yet it appears not so lightsome and
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so pleasant to them, as the Sun in the Firmament. And hence they think it but a small Compliment, to wish they were in that Heaven of theirs, and much less to be in the real Heaven. It would be but a cold Comfort to have it told them, that, This Night they should be with Christ in *Paradise*. At best, 'tis their *Imagination* that is only gratified, with the Description of Heaven; but their *Reason* is not satisfied; and so all is but *Imagery* in their Fancy, and Nothing at all of the true State of Heaven is perceived.

The Design of this Remark is to shew, that tho' in our Discourses, strong and lively Images are not only allowable, but also necessary, by Reason of the close vital Union between an organized Body, and an immortal Spirit in us; yet I think, they should be soundly explained, and dexterously applied, because of the great Hazard People are in, of being misled by them, so as to grasp at the *Shadow* instead of the *Substance*.

Seventhly, We preach *Christ the Power of God*, in convincing secure and stupid Consciences. 'Tis the Spirit of Christ that is sent into the World to convince Men of Sin, Jo. xvi. 8. And this I call also an Act of Power, because there is not only a particular Application of Light to the Conscience, but an immediate Reach of Christ's Power: That is, there is a Command of the supreme Judge, and a Power in the Command, to his Deputy and Substitute in our Bosom, to do its Office with a masterly Vigour. And this, as it may be inferred from the Immediateness and Suddenness of these Awakenings of Conscience, scarce leaving Time for the usual leisurely Steps of Ratiocination, tho' at the same Time acting in such a Manner, as quickens a rational Progress: So also it may be cleared from the Spirit of Adoption, Rom. viii. 16. witnessing with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God; which is a Testimony distinct from, and more forcible than the Testimony of our own Spirits.

Hence, by the Rule of Contraries, in a Work of

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Conviction, besides an Application of the *Law*, which is but weak through the *Flesh*, there is an *Application* of the *Spirit* of Christ; which, tho' with Respect to this particular Effect thereof, it is called the *Spirit of Bondage*, yet is a *Spirit of Power*, invigorating the Conscience to do its Office, with marvellous Energy and Strength.

Eighthly, We preach *Christ the Power of God*, in distressing and terrifying Souls, He makes his sharp Arrows pierce into the Hearts of his Enemies, Ps. lxxv. 5. Yea also, he is pleased sometimes either for *Correction*, or *Trial*, to send his immediate Terrors into the very Heart of the Souls of his own People. Examples of which we have in *Job*, *Heman*, and *David*. And as the Spirit of Man is immediately subject to God alone, so no less Power than his, can immediately reach it. 'Tis true, the LORD is pleased sometimes to make use of a melancholick Constitution, to cast up in the Mind, many gloomy Views and terrible Thoughts: Is therefore the whole of Soul Distresses to be resolved into melancholly Vapours? I should think the quite contrary, that since the LORD can make use of a Body to grieve and pain a Soul, he can much more strike that Soul with his own Hand, and with immediate Impressions of his Anger and Wrath. Unless one should as impiously, as absurdly, not only deny his *Power*, but also think that such *Things* as Devils, and all incorporeal rebel Spirits, are utterly without the Reach of his Justice and Wrath; or that there is no Torment in Hell that can vex them. Some may brave it out in very florid Discourses, that the intrinsic Turpitude of Sin is a sufficient Punishment in itself to the Offender: But where is the Man that would be *willing* enough to punish himself, according to the Demerit of Sin? To such a Pitch of Depravation hath his Self-love now degenerate, that he would rather excuse and extenuate his Sins. Or, if he were willing, where would be his *Strength* to do it? Could the feeble Arm of a Creature inflict on himself a Punishment a-

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adequate to the infinite Malignity of Sin, and the infinite Justice of God?

Ninthly, We preach Christ the Power of God, in regenerating and renewing of Souls. 'Tis he that renews us in the Spirit of our Minds, Eph. iv. 23. 'Tis he that quickens us when dead in Trespasses and Sins, Eph. ii. 1. 'Tis he that makes us Partakers of the divine Nature, 2 Pet. i. 4.

Some deny this *new Birth*, or understand by it, only a *Relative*, and not an *intrinsic subjective Change* made in the very Temper and Disposition of the Soul, whereby the Powers and Faculties of the Soul are turned off from sensual and sinful Objects, and determined Godwards. But, dare any venture their Souls upon it, that this Change only of a *Relation* is all that God means by *Regeneration* or the *new Birth*? Are they as sure as they hope to be saved, that God intends no more by the strong Expressions of having a *new Heart created in us, and a right Spirit renewed in us (a)*; by being *God's Workmanship (b)*; by being *Partakers of the divine Nature (c)*; by having *Christ formed in us (d)*; by being *born of God (e)*; and *born of the Spirit of God (f)*? Is it a safe Side of the Question, to think that neither one or all of these Phrases, import any intrinsic and subjective Change, in the Disposition and Inclination of the Soul, when at the same Time, this is the natural and peculiar Import of the Terms? Is it agreeable to the Rules of Prudence in other Cases, to chuse such a Side of the Question as may be short of the main Design? Have I not need to hit upon the true Sense of these Passages, which the Scripture makes necessary for my Salvation? At least, not rest in a Sense that is short of them?

What Incongruity is there in the Nature of the Thing? Or, what Hardship is it on Reason to believe, that he that formed the Spirit of Man within him, should

(a) *Psal. li. 10.* (b) *Eph. ii. 10.* (c) *2 Pet. i. 4.* (d) *Gal. iv. 19.* (e) *1 John iii. 9* (f) *John iii. 6.*

should stamp his Image upon it, and fashion it to his Likeness? Or, what Hurt will it do to a Man? Or, what Loss can he be at, if he expect *much*, yea his *All*, from the Hand of God, or from the Spirit of God? Or, what Good will it do to a Man? Or, how will it be to his Advantage, to have none to help him, none to cleanse him, none to quicken, and none to strengthen him? Suppose in perfect Health, when Pride comes to its Height, thou should be well conceited of thyself, and think thou canst shift well enough without God, or at least, that thou needest little at his Hands; yet when grim Death stares thee in the Face, will it not be needful that thou should have another Assistance to look to, than the utmost Stir and Excitation of all thy *natural Powers*.

What Inconvenience is there in this Doctrine? Or, what bad Effects can follow it, if a Man believe, that the Spirit of God can renew him, or that any Good in him is by the Grace of our Redeemer? Will it make a Man less Holy, Humble, or Diligent? I trow not, on the contrary, 'tis the earnest and humble Dependence of the Soul on GOD and his Grace, that is the very *Creaturely* and right Posture of the Soul towards him. What would be the very Rectitude, Order, and joyful Harmony of the now depraved Soul? Why, 'tis the claiming no more than its *Right*, which, as it is to be *little* or *nothing* in itself as a Creature, and altogether *nothing* in Comparison of God; for if HE IS, AND THERE IS NONE BESIDES HIM, what is left of *Being* to the Creature, but the *Name* thereof: So also, to be *less* and *worse* than *Nothing* by Reason of *Sin*. And again, 'tis the yielding to God what of Right pertains to him, which, as 'tis to have a Fulness of *Being*, so also a Fulness of *Grace* in himself: For I judge it but reasonable to think that we are as *little* in ourselves, or have as much of, *Non-entirety* in our *second* Creation, as in our *first*. Hence as the Soul must submit to him, in Humiliation, Self-abasement and Resignation, so also it must.

depend on his *Grace*; and give him this *Glory* that is due to him; that 'tis he of *whom, through whom, and to whom, are all Things*, Rom. xi. 36. Hence this looking to God for his Spirit and Grace, as 'tis a *Mean* of Holiness, for God giveth usually according to the Measure of our Dependence on him, so 'tis also a *State* of Holiness; 'tis the Right State and Posture of the Soul God-wards and Christ-wards; 'tis our Conformity to God; 'tis the Impression on us that is correspondent to his being the *First* and the *Last*, the Original and Final Cause of all Things. The very Purity of the Soul lies in its firm Adherence to God in Christ. But when other Objects interveen, and draw off the Soul from its Dependence, it becomes vilely debased, keeps not its Subordination to God, and loses as it were its proper Place in the Creation; for is not a Soul misplaced, when 'tis taken off its very Center, and becomes a *Vagabond*, and *Fugitive from the Presence of the Lord*?

Tenthly, *We preach Christ the Power of God in pardoning our manifold Transgressions, and subduing our mighty Sins.* He is the exalted Prince and Saviour, that gives Repentance and Remission of Sins, Act. v. 31. Who can forgive Sins but God? All the Angels, with all their Strength, cannot take Sin off the Soul. All Creatures in Heaven or in Earth cannot loose him whom God hath bound. 'Tis God's incommunicable Prerogative to forgive and do away Sins. 'Tis an Act of Supremacy and of Sovereignty, and the Power of the Lord is great, when he does it. Num. xiv. 17. *Let the Power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, saying, the Lord is long-suffering, and of great Mercy, forgiving Iniquity and Transgression.* Any hath Power enough to damn himself, but 'tis beyond the Power and Activity of Angels or Men to blot out the least Sin, or to disintangle the Soul from the least Corruption. They can neither take off its guilt, nor subdue its Power.

Lastly,

Lastly, We preach *Christ the Power of God, in raising Souls to Heaven, and in raising Bodies from the Grave.* He is the *Resurrection and the Life*, Jo. xi. 25. What but a divine Power can raise a Soul, once altogether Earthy, ingulft in Matter, and sunk in Sense, as high as the highest Heavens? Who can exalt unto Heaven, but He, whose Throne is above the Stars? Shall Souls, that besides their natural Biass to Earth, were fettered and inveigled with innumerable unavoidable Objects, diverting, nay commanding them another Way, shall these Souls be disintangled, and take their Flight Heaven wards! Certainly not by their own Might or Strength can they reach it, but by the *Power* of our Redeemer. Shall Moles! Earth-worms! rise above all that's terrestrial and temporal, above all the Regions where Mortality dwells! Who but God can effect this? Shall a Soul, that was once sitting in Darkness, and had the Shadows of Death sitting on its Eye-lids, shall that Soul be raised to the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*? This is the Doing of the Lord, 'tis the proper Work of a Deity, and none but God could atchieve such a Work.

Again, What but an infinite Power can re-unite, reset and bring up again, the Particles of the Dust, that were lodged in the secret Chambers of the Earth? Who could rescue our Bodies from the Grave, but He that *made* them? Who but the Lord, who proclaimed to *Moses* in the Bush, that He was *The Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, *Exod. iii.* can make them, who were long since dead, live again unto God? *Luk. xx. 38.* Or, who but He, that can make good the Covenant of Life and Salvation, he entred into, not with the Souls only, but with the whole Persons of *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; who, I say, but this Great *Jehovah* can make *dry Bones live*? Who but the
AM,

AM, or BEING itself, *Rom. ix. 5.* † can mould our Dust again into a human Body? and breathe into its Nostrils the Breath of Life? Who can conceive any other should be able to destroy Death, and the Works of the Devil, and overthrow the Empire of Hell?

The second Point in the Method is to shew, in what *Instances* Ministers of the Gospel preach, *Christ to be the Wisdom of God?*

First, *We preach Christ to be the Wisdom of God, in his Contrivance of the Work of our Redemption.* He was one of the Council held in ELOHIM from all Eternity, about Man's Salvation. All the beautiful Parts of this divine Scheme were framed in his Breast, who is the WISDOM, *Prov. viii.* *That was by the Father from everlasting, and before the Earth was,* did delight in the Thoughts of his own Heart, about the Restoration of the Children of Men. A *Contrivance*, so deep and mysterious, that if God had summoned Men and Angels to have sitten down in Council, to contrive the Way of our Redemption, what a confused Demur and Non-plus should they soon have been put in! Suppose a Consultation, would not the first Question have been, *How can it be, that*

† I humbly conceive, That, *Rom. ix. 5.* ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων ὁ εὐλογητὸς εἰς τὰς αἰῶνας may be rendered *The I AM, God over all, blessed for evermore*, by way of Apposition: For the *Septuagint* have the same Word with the same Prepositive as a Translation of EHEJEH *Exod. iii. 14.* which signifies a Necessity of Essence and Existence, and the Phraseology is suitable to the Gospel Style, *Rev. i. 4.* αὐτοῦ ὁ ὢν, and *ver. 8.* ὁ ὢν. None will pretend, that the Prepositive ὁ is relative, because if so, it would be in the Neuter Gender, which doth not quadrate. And if it were, it must be accented ὁ and not ὁ. The Text, when set in this Light, (which yet I submit to the Learned) is as expressive of the true and proper Deity of our Saviour, as 'tis possible for Words to express it, without the Necessity of changing ὁ ὢν into ὁ εἰς, or without any Variation of the Phrase whatsoever, or any Supplement made to it.

that God should deny his Justice, or remit of his Holiness, for such vile Worms as we are? certainly the sacred Rights of the injured Deity must be asserted and vindicated. There must be a Reparation of God's Honour by an equivalent Satisfaction. But how this should be accomplished! Here all created Minds would soon be at their Wits End! Since they could never have imagined, that God himself could, or, at least, would, make Satisfaction to God himself. It was then, the eternal Son of God said, *I come, to do thy Will.*

And as he hath said, lo, he hath done it! He hath actually found out an Entrance to Heaven, between the Wrath of God and the Sin of Man, and in a Way that greatly displays the Glory of Divine Mercy, Grace and Goodness. For did not Mercy interpose here, to rescue us, in the very Nick of Time, when we were on the very Brink of the Pit, whence there is no Redemption for ever? And was it not as far as even infinite Grace, or boundless Love itself could go, when God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all? Almighty Jehovah what could thou give us more than thy SELF! thy noble and Super-excellent SELF!

Again, the Contrivance is such, that tho' it raise Mercy to its highest Pitch of Glory; yet this is not done upon the Ruins of Holiness and Justice, but of all Ways possible is most for their Glory and Lustre: While 'tis made evident, that God's Hatred of Sin is carried as high as his Love to his own Son: And it appears, that the Stain of Sin is so deep, and the Vileness of Iniquity so great, that nothing but the Blood of God can expiate or purge it away. And again, that no Plea of Mercy can be heard in Prejudice to the Justice of God, which shews itself here in a Manner so astonishing, as begets in us more awful Veneration of God, than all the Shrieks and Yellings of the damned could raise in our Minds.

And

And again, when, as the Upshot of all this, Justice can now be look to, not as glooming with Threats, fenced with Terrors, or encompassed with lightning Flames; but tho' awful and venerable, yet serene, placid and accessible in Christ. And now, that 'tis visibly to be seen, how dazling Holiness and amiable Grace; how majestick Thundering Power and alluring Goodness, do all conspire, and infinitely set off one another, to the everlasting Admiration of Heaven! Is not this a Plot only fit for an infinite Mind! A Draught of *Wisdom*, as much above the Invention of Angels, as Infants! Yea, *Eph. iii. 10.* *Herein is made known, by the Church, unto Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, the manifold Wisdom of God; or as the Word πολυπικιας signifies, the Multiform or Variegated Wisdom of God; or that Wisdom of God, which is full of admirable Varieties.*

“ O! Angels! Archangels and Cherubims of Glory! were ye once thinking that Finite and Infinite
 “ could be unite together! That Eternity could be
 “ matched with Time! That the Creator and the Creature could make up one Person! Or, if such is your
 “ humble Deference to the Divine Wisdom, that the
 “ Possibility of this ye would not deny; yet did you
 “ imagine, that such an Union, in itself so incomprehensible, and which, tho' you should take Time
 “ (if such a Measure of Duration could possibly be
 “ in Eternity) to study, yet with all your piercing
 “ Capacity, you could not see through: Could you
 “ imagine, that such an Union as this, would be made
 “ with such a low Nature as ours! That is, not with
 “ Spirits pure, and such were of the highest Order,
 “ or chief Rank of the Creation; but with Spirits
 “ of a lower Class, and which were so meanly
 “ hous'd, as to dwell in Cottages of Clay! Yea, that
 “ the Union should be made, not only with *Spirits*
 “ dwelling in *Flesh*, but also with *Flesh* itself! Or,
 “ if even, when ye reckoned such a Dispensation

" as this so very unlikely and improbable, that a
 " Thought of it could scarce enter into your Heads,
 " ye durst not after all, affirm it to be utterly im-
 " possible: Yet could ye once conceive, that the
 " *consubstantial* Son of God would personally u-
 " nite himie f with Dust, and ally himself to us;
 " not when our Nature was in its pure and in-
 " nocent State, but when miserably perverted, and
 " made vile by Sin! Doth not such an Oecono-
 " my, so very stupenduous, not only puzzle your
 " *Thoughts*, but outreach your *Admiration* itself?
 " And if, in your further Searches into a Mytte-
 " ry ye can never fathom, ye shall see Him, who
 " is your Lord and Head, dying! Him, who
 " was Life itself parting with it! Him, who Thun-
 " ders in the Heavens, slain by Men! If ye see the
 " Perfections of Beauty enduring the Shame! The
 " Excellency of Strength nailed to the Cross! The
 " Almighty Jehovah suffering a painful Death!
 " Doth not this dazle all your Apprehensions? and
 " astonish Invention itself? And when further, ye
 " have contemplated our great Redeemer, dying,
 " as a Sacrifice for our Sins! And have beheld the
 " Lord of Heaven and Earth, grappling with the Pow-
 " ers of Hell! The Son of God's Love agonized
 " with a Sense of his Father's Wrath! What are
 " your Thoughts of this? Do you not find a Depth
 " here ye cannot dive? And a Height ye cannot
 " reach unto? Is not this a Mystery, broader than
 " the Earth, and higher than the Heavens?

" O! *All the Creation of God*! Attend with Asto-
 " nishment into such an amazing Contrivance!
 " Which, by its *unsearchableness*, manifests itself to
 " be altogether *divine*! That He, who was in-
 " throned in the Highest Bliss! Equal to God!
 " And equally posselt of all God-like Excellencies,
 " should come down among Men! And dwell in
 " our Nature! And hereby cast a Vail upon his
 " own Glorious Divinity! And that the final It-

" sue

“ sue of all this should be, that the Divine Glory
 “ shall shine with greater Effulgence, than ever
 “ otherwise it could be seen by the Creature!
 “ How comes this about? Infinite Glory, can’t
 “ not thou appear in thy Strength, till first thou
 “ art eclipsed? Divine Lustre, could not thou shine,
 “ till first thou wast hid? Ineffable Resplendency,
 “ cannot thou be seen, till thou art veiled?

Here is a Knot, which no created Mind in Heaven, or in Earth could ever have loosed: Tho’ no Question, when it is revealed, the loyal and dutiful Part of the Creation will all own, that all this is but like unto God, who hath other Rules to walk by than we: Who, tho’ *He is Light*, yet *hath Clouds and Darknes round about Him: Who makes Darknes his secret Place, and his Pavilion round about him.* And to whom ’tis a Thing very usual to command *Light to shine out of Darknes.* Yea, so far doth *Unsearchableness* belong to the very Being and peculiar Glory of God, that whether He describes himself *as covered with Light as with a Garment*, Psal. civ. or; *as having Darknes for his Covering*, Psal. xviii. They are Accounts of his Majesty of much the same import. For when he is described as *Light*, yet ’tis such, as we cannot see, by Reason of so great *Glory*: Or, when He is described as *dwelling in Darknes*, yet ’tis so glorious, as that ’tis made *His Pavilion round about Him.* However it is, *Light inaccessible* could never be approached unto by weak Mortals, unless temper’d with *Darknes.* And *Light infinitely transparent* could never be seen, unless shining from the God-head on the Human Nature of Christ, and thence reflected on us. *

“ And

* There were mystick Traditions in the ancient Philosophy significant to this purpose; as when they tell that Wisdom labouring to comprehend *Being* or the *P*rofundity of the divine Essence, was like to have lost itself, till it was help’d by *Ones*.

“ And O! *degenerate Mankind!* what say ye of
 “ this glorious and rich Device of the Son of God’s
 “ coming down in your Place and Room? and there-
 “ in answering all that *Justice* can demand of you,
 “ that he may perform all that *Mercy* and *Grace* can
 “ incline to you? Do not you own, that this is a
 “ Contrivance, at once very wonderful, and very
 “ taking? When ye see, that for all that Sin, or
 “ Hell, Death or Devils, can do, ye can be raised as
 “ high as Heaven: And when ye see what Advan-
 “ tage infinite Wisdom can take, even from our Sins
 “ and Unworthiness, our Necessities and Miseries,
 “ the Law and Justice, at once to glorify God, and
 “ exalt Men to even a greater Happiness, than what
 “ he had lost? Hath the blessed Son of God found
 “ out the Way of bringing Sons to God, from among
 “ the Vassals of *Satan*; Children of Light out of
 “ Darkness, and Heirs of Heaven from the Gates of
 “ Hell! O wonderful!

“ O! contrite and broken-hearted Sinners! What
 “ are your Thoughts of this Business? when ye be-
 “ hold, what (according to the wonderful Contriv-
 “ vance of our Redemption) the eternal Son of God
 “ hath undertaken and done for you! Do not you
 “ see God dwelling *personally* in the human Na-
 “ ture; and that by coming to God, through the
 “ *Flesh* of your *Immanuel*, which is so nearly re-
 “ lated to God, and so nearly related to you, ye
 “ cannot miss your Steps in approaching near unto the
 “ divine Majesty? And do you not see, that God can
 “ now save you, *sinful* as you are, in a Way of Ho-
 “ nour to his Holiness and Justice? So that no Com-
 “ petition can now remain between his Glory and
 “ your Happiness; but ye may ground your Hope,
 “ not only on the Promises and Faithfulness, but on
 “ the very Being and Glory of God. O wonder-
 “ ful! Who could have lookt for such a Thing as
 “ this, if it had not been revealed! And who can
 “ look enough to it, now that it is!

“ Do

“ Do ye see, instead of the terrible Views of unpardoned Guilt, a God reconcileable in Christ, and holding him forth a Propitiation for Sins, and that accordingly by Faith ye receive Remission of Sins? Do ye find, instead of the noisome Impurities in your Hearts, where never any Thing holy, nor any Thing pure, nor any Thing pleasant had before lighted, that now the Spirit hath descended upon you, to enlighten, enliven, purify and comfort your Souls? And whereas before, Death and the Shadows of everlasting Darknesh hover over your Heads, the Fear of which made you pale like Death, and grim like Hell: Do ye now see, that Jesus Christ your Lord, according to the eternal Compact between the Father and Him, hath by Death given Death its deadly Wounds, hath gone into the Land of Destruction, and vanquished it in its own Soil? O rare Contrivance! O amazing Wisdom! What Thoughts doth this raise in your Minds! What Emotions of Heart! and what Tides of Admiration overflow and overwhelm the Soul, at every Thought here! ”

Secondly, *We preach Christ the Wisdom of God in the gradual Manifestations of his redeeming Grace to the Lapsed Posterity of Man*, Heb. 11. He appeared in the first Ages only as a Morning Star; afterwards as the Dawning of the Day: And last of all, as the Sun shining in his full Strength. *Mal. iv. 2.* First, there were only obscure Hints, yet sufficient to point him out: And then more apparent Discoveries. And, lastly, the actual Exhibition of Christ in the Flesh.

That there was a Saviour promised in the *Old Testament*, and that such an extraordinary Person was expected by the *Jews*, is evident by all Manner of Proofs, and as great Strength and Clearness of Argument, as any Fact (for in this View it comes under the Notion of a Fact) is capable of. What clearer Vouchers can we possibly desire in the Argument,
 than

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(b)

than the sacred Oracles of the *Jews*, and the Glosses of all their *Doctors*?

As to their sacred Records, What else could they mean by *the Seed of the Woman's breaking the Head of the Serpent*? (a) How otherwise were all Nations of the Earth blessed in Abraham? (b) What other Person could they call David's Lord? (c) On, did they think it was David that saw no Corruption, (d) when his Sepulchre was with them till Christ's Day? (e) Could they think that the Promises made to David, That his Throne should be as the Days of Heaven, and established for ever as the Sun and Moon, (f) were restricted to a temporal Kingdom, when an everlasting Covenant is also made, and the sure Mercies of David in it, with all that incline their Ear and come unto God? (g) Could they possibly conceit, that all and every one of the obedient were to be temporal Kings, and their Posterity after them, to all Generations? Much less be all Kings over Israel. Again, what could they understand by a Virgin's * conceiving and bearing a Son, whose Name was to be called Immanuel? (h) Could they think that this was meant of an ordinary Conception? Where would be the Wonder of this? What Occasion was there for all the Solemnity, THE LORD HIMSELF WILL GIVE YOU A SIGN? Why such a solemn Notice commanded in the Word BEHOLD? Who can imagine, that when

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the

(a) Gen. iii. 15. (b) Gen. xviii. 18. (c) Psal. cx. 1.
(d) Psal. xvi. 10. (e) Act. ii. 29. (f) Psal. lxxxix. 36,
37. (g) Isa. lv. 3.

* ALMA is translated *παρθενος* a Virgin by the Septuagint Version, the oldest Version of the Old Testament, being 300 Years before there was any Controversy between the *Jews* and Christians. And so did the most ancient *Rabbins* among the *Jews* also translate it. The Word signifies *hidden* from the Custom of Eastern Nations, in keeping their Daughters, while Virgins, retired from publick Company.

(h) Isa. vii. 14.

the Prophet proposed to *Ahaz*, to ask him a Sign, either in the Depth below, or in the Height above, that is, either to the dividing of the Sea, or the causing of the Sun to stand still; that yet the Prophet in the Name of God, and after so much Pomp and Address, should offer a Thing so ordinary and low, as could scarce rouse up the Attention, much less be a Sign of any great Event? Or, was there a Possibility of doubting in the Matter, when 'tis told so expressly of this very Son given, and of this Child born, *Isa. ix. 6. That His Name should be called wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace?* How can it be applied to *Hezekiah*, that He was the Son promised to be born, *Isa. vii. 14.* when He was born nine or ten Years before? For, *Ahaz* reigned but sixteen Years, and *Hezekiah* was twenty-five Years old, when he began to reign. Or, How could it be applied to *Isaiah's* Son, that the Land of *Israel* should be called his Land, *as being the Immanuel promised, Isa. viii. 8. And that of the Increase of his Government there should be no End, and that He should sit upon the Throne of his Father David,* as we have it *Isa. ix. 7?* Or, How was it applicable to any of them, or to any Creature else, that His Name should be called *The Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace,* as we have it, *Isa ix. 6?* Again, what other Governor could they expect from *Bethlehem Ephratah*, whose Outgoings have been of old, even from the Days of Eternity, *Mic. v. 2?* And whom could they imagine to be *Messias the Prince*, *Dan. ix. 25. MESSIAH NAGHID the Prince or Chief Messiah,* or the *Messiah* that was to be manifested? And if the *seventy Weeks* of Years, or four hundred and ninety Years shall commence from the going forth of the *Commandment* to build and restore *Jerusalem*, as 'tis determined by *Daniel*, in the foresaid Place, and have their Beginning from the Commission given by *Ar-*

saxerxes Longimanus to *Ezra*, as we have it, *Ezra* vii. 7. Then this Prophecy, in all the Parts of it, is so literally fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*, as some have made the very Clearness of the Prophecy an Obstacle to their Belief of the same. But I cannot stay upon this.

Can we crave any greater Evidence of the Faith and Expectation of the *Jews*, than their own Books sacred and common? The *seventy* translate SHADDAI (the undoubted Name of God) into *αὐτός*, *Ezek.* i. 28. The *Chaldaick Paraphrase* frequently hath MIMRAH for God himself, which *Philo* renders *αὐτός*. And to shew that he understands it personally, he calls it *ἡ ὁμοειδὴς Θεότης*. Yea there is not an Author extant among the *Jews*, however they differ as to his Person, or Character, but what declare their Faith and Expectation of the *Messias*. And some of their famous *Rabbins* tell, it was the ancient Doctrine of all the Doctors. And again, these that were Enemies both to *Jews* and Christians, confess this was the Faith of that Nation, as *Celsus* the Epicurean, *Suetonius*, &c.

Here it would be pleasant to observe, if the Matter were not grave and weighty, all the *Jews* of whom there is any Thing extant, affirming their Faith in the *Messias*, and the *Heathens* denying they had such a Faith. The *Jews* asserting this was the Doctrine of all their Ancestors before them, and the *Heathens* denying they maintained such a Doctrine. The ancient *Heathens* confessing this was the old Faith and Expectation of the *Jews*, and the modern *Heathens* denying the same. I should think, if this could have been denied with any good Grace, or with the least Measure of Shamefacedness, it would have been most proper for Adversaries in the first Ages of Christianity. But the Evidence of this was too glaring then to be denied; and therefore, 'tis reserved for one of the poor and last Shifts of modern Infidels. But, why so? Why, when pinched, do you force yourselves into so many Absurdities? When will the gloomy Cause

Cause of Infidelity requite the half of your Pains? Will it do it in Life? Or at Death? Or after Death, among the dark Shades below? But what Virtues, what Point of Morality can your Infidelity serve for in Life? What Comfort can it yield you in Death? Or what Prospect can it afford you beyond Death? And a total Extinction thou canst not so much as wish for, till thou hast first shaken off the Principles engrained in the human Nature, as well as renounced the Christian Religion.

But what we are observing, as of greater Importance, is the infinite *Wisdom* of God, in the gradual Manifestation of our Redemption, by a *God incarnate*. Hereby all the Threeds of this divine Contexture are more leisurely, and more accurately look'd into: The several Parts of which are a Scene of Contemplation and Admiration. And there is Time hereby to consider each Part and Pendicle of this mysterious Contrivance, without being too much dazzled, or altogether confounded. Had the whole Face of this deep and astonishing *Mystery* been presented at once in full View, then, as the *Israelites* could not behold *Moses* his Face by Reason of its *Glory*, till a Vail was cast upon it; so the Brightness of this amazing Dispensation would have so transcended the Capacity of weak Mortals, as that they could not see, by Reason of so great a *Light*. Hereby there is let out a gradual Manifestation, corresponding to the gradual Improvement of our Faculties: A thing that seems not incompatible with the State of *Comprehensors* in Heaven, much less the State of *Viators* on Earth. For now, saith the Apostle, *Eph. xi. 10. unto Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places, is made known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God*. And who, that considers what God is, or how weak our Minds are, can conceive, that any, even the most noble of all Creatures, can take in *All* of God, and his Works, at the first Glance? And may not a Being, boundless and infinite in all possible

possible Excellencies, administer further and further Discoveries infinitely and endlessly?

Again, by this gradual and various Manifestation of our Redeemer, there is seen that infinite Variety that holds in all the Works of God, as the Expression of his exuberant Power, Wisdom and Goodness: And which will be an agreeable and eternal Entertainment to all noble and contemplative Minds. Will it not add to the Contemplation and Satisfaction of excellent and well-affected Souls, to behold not only the Grace revealed, but the various Modes, Ways and Degrees of its Revelation? Not only Things themselves, but the Connexion of Things, furnish an agreeable Employment to searching and active Souls. Is it not a new Pleasure to see the fit Relation between the *Type* and the *Antitype*? And the exact Correspondence between the Promise and the Accomplishment of the Promise? And all the several Connexions between Events and Events, which appeared many Time to us to be altogether disjointed, or full of mysterious Intricacy? And hereby the Lord keeps up that STATE that becomes him, as the Sovereign and Ruler of Men: For being Master of his own Grace, to give it, when, to whom, and in what Measure he pleases: He gives it so gradually, that such *Things* as we are, may not only mind we are *Creatures*, but also that we are *Sinners*. It was on this Account he thought fit to train up the *Jews*, for some Time, under a strict and severe Pedagogy. And what Aspect would it have to the Angels that never offended? Or, how would it look to those Sons of the Morning, if a Multitude of those, who in their first and best Estate, were Beings of a lower Form than they, and now by Sin had precipitated themselves as low as the Beasts that perish if they should all at once, arrive to a full View of all the Mysteries of a *God incarnate*? when they themselves disdain not to be Scholars, and Students of that Mystery to this very Day, 1 *Pet.* i. 12. and *Eph.* iii. 10.

And hereby again, we are led to the grateful Study, not only of the divine Providence towards the *Church* of God, in all the several Ages and Forms thereof; but to observe also how the Wheels of Providence turn upon the *rest* of the World: So that a new Scene of Wonders opens itself to our View. How not only the Lord preserves his *People*, but also how he deals with their *Enemies*, and by innumerable Ways, thwarts, defeats and over-rules them. And these, and such like Providences, as they magnify the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God on Earth, so also they accent the Praises and heighten the *Hallelujahs* in Heaven, as may be seen, *Rev.* ii. and 12. and 14 and 15 Chapters.

Thirdly, We preach *Christ the Wisdom of God*, in the Choice of the Persons that were at first to promulgate the News of the Redemption purchased by him. Had *Politicians*, *Philosophers* and *spruce Orators* been the first Broachers of the Christian Religion, and the illiterate Vulgar their Followers, natural Suspicion and Incredulity might have suggested, that all was but an artful Contrivance, or a State Policy, being in the Hands of such as might be Masters both of the Design and Execution. But being preached by a few *illiterate Men*, that had no Weapon to combat the Gentile Philosophy, nor the *Jewish* Bigotry; nor any Motive to support themselves, in any Attempt so very difficult and dangerous, as the overthrowing all the established Religions on Earth, no possible Jealousy of their Sincerity can be left us. That a few unlearned Men, by preaching the despised Doctrine of the *Cross*, with plain Simplicity, should confound all the *learned Wights* of the World, and more prevail upon the Hearts of Men, tho' prepossessed with contrary Principles, and contrary Pleasures, than they could do with all the Lectures of *Philosophy*. This shews *Christ* to be the *Wisdom* of God, and demonstrates what follows in the Verse next our Text, *that the Foolishness of God is wiser than Men.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, We preach Christ the Wisdom of God, in his Designation of the Persons to be saved. Had they been only or mainly the Rich of the World, then Riches might have been thought to be among God's best Gifts, as being a Mean or a Qualification for Grace and Glory; and then they might have been over-valued, or rather they could never have been enough valued: And then again, the Means and the End here would be altogether inconsistent, since 'tis the Design and Effect of Grace to call us from the World, raise our Spirits above it, and cause us deny and crucify the same. Or, had they been only, or mainly the Wise of the World, then our Faith had been founded, rather on the *Wisdom of Man, than than the Power of God*; at least but a small Difference would have been reckoned, between the Attainments of Reason and the Discoveries of Faith. But that Christ should generally call *the Poor of the World to be rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom*; hereby he stains the Pride and Glory of Man; he poses his Intellectuals, and makes it appear, that the Excellency of the Wisdom, as well as of the Power, is only of God.

Fifthly, We preach Christ to be the Wisdom of God, in the great and final End of the Redemption he hath purchased, which is, 2 Theff. i. 10. That God in Christ may be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. And any End lower than this would be unworthy of divine Wisdom. It appears indeed to be an idle Question, Whether the *Glory of God*, or the *Enjoyment of him*, as our chief Happiness, be Man's chief End, because this is to abstract a Thing from itself? For the honouring God as our Lord, and the Enjoyment of him as our Happiness, are not two Acts: Or, at least they are so intimately interwoven, that they run through one another. We glorify God by enjoying him: Being that the Glory due to God, is to make him our chief Joy and our eternal Excellency. And we again enjoy God, by glorifying him:

Since

Since all Acts, whereby God is honoured, naturally turn the Powers of the Soul upon him, and lead to Communion with him. And it cannot be otherwise in the Nature of the Thing. For, if the Glory of God be not our chief Delight, it is not our chief End: And where it is our chief Delight, it is also our chief Happiness.

Yet to represent the all-wise and almighty God to have any End lower than himself, and his own Glory, would be injurious to him, and unbecoming his infinite Majesty.

'Tis not true, that the main Design of Religion is, that, by *social Virtues*, we should be serviceable and useful to one another. Let us suppose one very careful in what are called social Virtues. What does he? He provides his Neighbours with the Comforts of this Life, but is this in Subserviency to a future Life? If not, what's his ultimate View, but that his Neighbour may live as an Animal of Pleasure? And if it be in Subserviency to a future State, there is an higher View in this, than the ministring to our Neighbour's Necessities: Unless one should think there were such Necessities, and a Supply of such Necessities, in the other World. Or, perhaps it will be said, he is improving his Neighbour in Temperance, Meekness, Patience, &c. But again, is this to prepare his Neighbour for the pure Enjoyments in Heaven, consisting in seeing God's Face, beholding his Glory, and in loving, adoring and praising him for ever and ever? If so, his Views go higher than social Virtues; 'tis the Glory of God that is mainly intended, and the Man's Happiness is placed in the Enjoyment of God. If, on the other hand, thou hast no other Design but to teach thy Neighbour, how with the greatest Ease and Tranquillity, he may enjoy his earthly and sensual Pleasures: This *Epicurus* himself thought necessary for the heightening and perfecting of his sensual Happiness. Or, it may be, thou sayest, thou art instructing thy Neighbour in useful Sciences.

Useful,

Useful, for what? Are they useful to make a Soul be-
have like itself, or as an intelligent Being, designed
for the Enjoyments of an intellectual World, or for
the forming an immortal Spirit, for the full Vision of
God, and Communion with him in Glory, which is
the total Sum of our Happiness? If so, thou hast a
Design that goes higher than social Virtues, as such,
and which gives *Morality* to them, viz. A supreme
Respect to the Glory and Enjoyment of God. On the
other hand, if these Instructions reach no higher,
than a Man's Utility, and Profit in this Life, 'tis evi-
dent, thou designest no more to make a good *Animal* of thy Neighbour.

In short, we love and serve God either, chiefly for
his *spiritual*, or chiefly for his *temporal Blessings*. If
we love and serve him chiefly for his spiritual Bles-
sings; that is, for Pardon, Sanctification, Communi-
on with himself, &c. The plain Sense of this is, we
would be freed from the Curse of the Law, which
with-holds the Spirit of God from our Souls, and we
would be like unto God, and conform to his moral
Excellencies: We would see his Face, and enjoy his
Favour: And so it is God *himself* that is the ultimate
Term of all our Designs and Motions. Or, we love
and serve God chiefly for a temporal Felicity. If so,
temporal Things will be the formal Reason, or chief
Ground of our Love to God; and so they are loved
more than God, at least equally with him. And
where lies the Virtue or Morality of this? Can that
be a moral Act, which is not suited to the Nature of
the Object? or bears not some Proportion to the
various and gradual Excellencies of the Objects it is
conversant about? For a Man to love his Friend no
otherwise, than he loves his Beast, would this be a
moral Act of Love? Hence, supreme Love to God
must be the first Beginning of all true Morality, be-
ing that which specifies, Qualifies, and regulates all
moral Acts. For herein lies the *Good* of every good
Action, the Reference it hath to our chief Good.

If it be said again, these temporal Benefits are neither the formal Reason, nor the chief Cause of our Love to God, but only the *Arguments* and *Motives* exciting us to contemplate, love, and admire his amiable and ravishing Excellencies, so that 'tis God himself our Love mainly and ultimately Terminates upon. This is just saying what we are now proving, that the Glory of God is his own chief End, and should also be ours.

So far as we regard the Scriptures of Truth, we will find ourselves under an unavoidable Necessity of thinking, that to be known, loved, imitated, depended upon, praised, admired, is God's great End in planting Religion, and making moral Agents capable of it. That as it is his Glory to have a world of Creatures hanging upon him, and celebrating his infinite Excellencies, so he takes Pleasure in this: Which yet is not to make our Acts his chief End, but his own Perfections as terminate upon by us. *He takes Pleasure in his Saints, (a) rejoices over Zion, (b) and rests in Love to his People (c):* And, if perhaps we find Difficulty in reconciling such a Thing in God, with some of our Notions concerning the divine Nature, shall we for this deny these Things in him? Shall we for what we have thought of God, deny what he hath expressly said of himself? Or, because these Things are not the same in God as in us, will we deny there is any Thing in God correspondent to these Accounts he hath given of himself? We cannot but think, that as God takes infinite Satisfaction in his own *Essence*, so also in his own *Operations*. His glorious Decrees and Contrivances cannot but be satisfying to him. When his *Countenance beholdeth the upright*, it cannot but be pleasing. Should a Man confess only the Religion of Nature, he must own that it was an Act of Pleasure in God to make the World. Yet let us still mind, that the Lord needs not go out of himself for Pleasure: 'Tis from his own

(a) *Psal.* 149. 4. (b) *Zeph.* 3. 17. (c) *ibid.*

own Attributes and Perfections shining in his Works, that his Delight results.

How surprising is it to find some of our late *Authors*, giving more than a Hint, that if God made his Glory his chief End; or could be delighted with the Praises of his rational Creatures, this would be to represent him, as having vain Glory for his End, or as one pleased with empty Praises. I suppose it would be to little Purpose to reprove Men that speak after this Fashion from the Word of God, we must bring them to the Bar of Reason. If God should eternally delight and glory in the Fulness of Being and Perfection there is in himself: Or, if he should take Pleasure in the real Acknowledgment of this, by his rational Creatures; 'tis said by these Men, the one would be *Selfishness* and vain Glory, and the other *empty Praises*. And why so? To be sure it must be, because it would be Selfishness and vain Glory in Man to boast of his own Excellencies; and nothing but his Pride can be soothed by the Applause of his Fellow-creatures. But who sees not, that when speaking of God, the reverse of all this is true? Why is it vain Glory in Man? The Exility and Meanness of the *Object* cannot admit of it: There is not *Worth* to bear it out: Both the Subject and the Object of the Glory is *Vanity*: He wants a *Sufficiency* to support it: His *Self* is set up in Opposition to God, on whom he depends for his *All*: His Glory is derogatory to the Glory of God: 'Tis a denying God his Due, and usurping to himself more than what is his: And the Applauses and Acclamations of his Fellow-creatures make it no better, but more increase the Vanity. But, if the Creature may not glory in *nothing*, may not God glory in his own *Fulness*, and in the University of Perfection there is in himself? What could he delight and glory in from Eternity, but his own glorious *Self*? How impious as well as absurd must it be, to think it so much as possible, that he should *over-estimate* himself, or be *over-conceited* of his

own infinite Excellencies? And is there not an eternal *moral Fitness* in the rational Creature's giving to its Creator the Glory due to his Name? Yea, suppose thou wert none of God's Creatures, would it not be morally, and eternally fit, to commend the *best* of Beings, to take notice of the best Excellencies, to admire them, and be suitably affected with them? Are these Praises empty and vain? Do they not shew, that there is a due Proportion in our *Ideas*, and without which there would be an Untruth and Disproportion in them? Is it not morally fit to think and tell the *Truth* of God? That he is a *Being* so immensely and incomprehensibly Perfect, as that it would take a long, long Eternity to sound his Praises? which if denied him, then farewell *supreme Love to him*, and all the *servent Desires*, where by the Soul stretches itself with a Kind of *Infiniteness* towards him; and all the *noble, boundless Affections*, which, tho' not proportional, yet are in some sort correspondent to his infinite Excellencies; and which make Heaven to be Heaven. But, suppose there were no Heaven, yet what geperous Soul would chuse to be either so *stupid*, as not to see God's infinite Excellencies; or so *wicked*, as not to admire and praise them, when seen? For not to acknowledge God, is to deny him; and to acknowledge him, without loving, praising and admiring him, would be devilish Wickedness.

Sixthly, *We preach Christ the Wisdom of God, in his instituting apt Means of Grace.* That the Lord hath appointed a Course of Means; That he worketh Grace in the Soul ordinarily, in the Use of Means; that these Means are suitable to the Nature of a rational Soul; and that they prosper best in Grace, who are most diligent in the Use of Means, are Truths uncontestable. But, what is the Connexion between *Grace* and the *Means* of Grace, is not so easie to determine. Some think it enough to say, That where God bestows the greatest Plenty of Means, there may be expected the greatest Share of Heaven's Influences.

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fluences. Some again say, There is a Promise of Grace made to him that does as well as he can in the Use of Means. But where to find the Man, who does as well as he can, will be the great Difficulty; every one's Conscience and Experience testifying he is not the *Man*. For tho' it be certain, that the Unregenerate cannot *repent, believe, turn unto God and live*; yet the immediate Reason why they do not repent, believe, &c. is not because they *cannot*, (tho' 'tis most certain they cannot) but because they *will not*, John v. 40. They will not try how far their Powers can go: And so their Impotence is both physical and moral; and, in both Respects, total and ineluctable.

But what I observe here of the Wisdom of Christ in this Particular, is, that the Means, tho' not *formally*, yet *materially*, are of the same Nature with the End. I think none can mistake me when I say, *materially*; It is so, since 'tis the Form only that specifies the Action (as the Schools speak). I shall illustrate this in a few Particulars.

The first I mention is *Prayer*. Doth not the very Sum and Substance of Religion ly in the Submission of the Soul unto God, Dependence on him, Conformity to him, Confidence in him, and the Ascent of the Heart towards him? And is not all this in the very Nature of Prayer? 'Tis a Mistake to call Prayer only a subservient Duty, as if it were not so much Religion, as a Mean of Religion. Is it not an Act of Adoration, and of Submission to the Great God; the Soul's immediate Hanging on the Lord, and its most earnest Desire for the most intimate Nearness and Conformity to him? All which will be eternally the pious Exercises of the Saints above; and which naturally arise from their moral Relation to God.

Again, another Mean is God's *Word* read, heard and meditated upon. And what is Regeneration, but the Inscription of God's Law in the Heart? Regene-
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rating Grace is the Finger of God writing his Word, and engraving it by his Spirit on the immortal Mind of Man; as that there is something in him correspondent to every Part of the Word, and something in every Part of him that is so correspondent. Here then is the Wisdom of Christ in appointing Means of Grace that materially run into Grace.

Seventhly, *We preach Christ the Wisdom of God, in appointing the Grace of Faith to be the Instrument of our Justification*, so that Sinners shall be justified in the Way of believing in Christ and his Righteousness, *Rom. iii. 22. and v. 1. Gal. ii. 16.* Yea, what other Way was possible? Thou hast no original, no essential Righteousness, none but what is derived, dependent and communicated: And canst thou obtain a dependent Righteousness, without depending upon it? Or a communicated Righteousness, without receiving it? 'Tis true, it is a gifted, imputed Righteousness, wherewith we are justified. But what if it be? Is it the less acceptable to God, that 'tis his own Gift? Or hast thou the less Warrant to receive it, because held out to thee by his own Hand? *Rom. iii. 25.* As thou art a Creature, if ever thou be justified, it must be by a gifted Righteousness. For what hast thou, O Man; nay, O Angel, O Archangel, but what thou hast received? And as thou art a Sinner, it must be doubly given, that is, given to one, who is both *Undeserving* and *Hell-deserving*, else no Flesh living could be justified. But, if neither carnal Reason can understand, nor a proud Will can stoop to an imputed Righteousness; yet, at least, thou must own thy Righteousness, whatever it is, to be gifted; since a Creature Righteousness not given is a plain Contradiction. Again, thou must confess, that there is no Proportion between thy temporary Obedience and an eternal Reward: And that by paying what is due, much less when thou comest short infinitely, thou dost not merit eternal Life and Happiness. Hence, if this Righteousness of thine give a Right to Heaven's Happiness, there is some Kind of

Imputa-

Imputation in it: 'Tis estimated, and we are dealt with as if it gave a Right to Life, when in itself it does not. What is then the great Odds between an imputed and an inherent Righteousness, since both are given, and an inherent Righteousness cannot give Right to Life eternal, without a gracious Estimate? Only the Gospel-way of justifying Sinners hath this Advantage and Security, which every thoughtful Soul finds he needeth, that a real perfect Righteousness is interposed, sufficient in itself, to give all that believe in the same, a Right to Life and Happiness, without any Wrong done to any Party concerned in the Business. There is no Wrong, ye are sure, done to the Person justified; when he is righted in the most obliging Manner possible. No Wrong is done unto God, the Judge of all the Earth, when his most sacred Rights are asserted more vigorously, and vindicated in a more awful and astonishing Manner, than if all Mankind had been hurled into Hell. And at the same time, his God-like Goodness shines with such Brightness, as strikes Heaven into eternal Rapture. And no Wrong is done to our Mediator, since he submitted voluntarily, had a Right to dispose of himself, and a Power to eluctate from under his Sufferings; and hereby also hath acquired a new supervening Right, whereby, as he is *God incarnate*, he is *Lord over all*.

And the receiving of this Righteousness, and the resting on it by *Faith*, tho' it is a positive Institution, and the Efficacy of Faith is from the Divine Word, yet it is so naturally founded upon our present Posture and Relation to God, that I conceive it even goes to Heaven with a Man. I know it is sometimes said, That the Grace of Faith goes to Heaven's Threshold with the Believer, and there it leaves him for ever. But I suppose what they intend is only, that all the Darkness and Imperfection there is in our Faith, then ceaseth; or that such an obscure and imperfect Faith as ours, then leaves a Man, when he arrives in Heaven; where there is a greater Clearness, Certainty

and Satisfaction in all its Acts. For I cannot think that the Believer will leave his Faith, or any Grace else behind him, when he enters into Heaven. How could it be said, that Grace and Glory differ not in their Kind, if what is essential to the one, be totally destitute in the other? And what Security have the glorified Saints for the Eternity of their Happiness, (for a Birth-right to it they have none) but their Faith in the Promises and Faithfulness of God? But this is not all I am now meaning, I humbly conceive, that all the Redeemed of the Lord will humbly depend upon Christ, and apply his Merit and Satisfaction, as their only Right to Life and Happiness, through all the possible Moments of Eternity. The Saints in Heaven will never desire to stand on their own Strength, nor seek to have all their Stock of Grace in their own Hands: But through all Eternity will own they need a *Day's man*. What! will they not own the Necessitousness and Dependence, which are ingrained in them, as they are Creatures, and the Folly they were chargeable with as Sinners? Will not the very Angels, when God charges them with Folly,* take with the Charge, and think their greatest Safety lies in scugging themselves under the Wings of our Mediator, *Eph. i. 10.*

'Tis true, 'tis said, *Here we see through a Glass, but then Face to Face*, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But should these Metaphors be urged, even to a philosophical Nicety, they do but the more confirm what we are saying; since 'tis the same Object, and by the same Rays, that we see in a Mirror, and Face to Face: The only Difference being, that in seeing Face to Face, the Rays come in a more direct Line, whereas, in a Mirror or Glass, they take a greater Compass in the Way of Refraction.

And I dare say, such a Thought as this will raise no ungrateful *Idea* of Heaven in any holy and well-affected Soul. Heaven will not be the less Heaven, that

* i. e. Mutability and Defectibility.

that the Ransomed of the Lord prostrate themselves there at their Redeemer's Feet, and own, with Humility and Thankfulness, that they hold their All of him, and under him. I believe rather they would think something wanting in Heaven, if this were not in it. What, Sirs! will it not be eternally and rapturously pleasant to be owning and confessing your Dependence on the great Redeemer, and your immense Obligations to his Grace? Do not the Glorified do what becomes them, when they cast down their Crowns before the Lamb, and him that sits on the Throne? *Rev. iv. 10.* And is it not this, and the like of this that begets in them eternal Trances, Raptures, Extasies, &c? As may be seen in their Songs and Hallelujahs in the *Book of the Revelation.*

What I design by this, is to shew, That however this Justification by Faith in Christ's Righteousness, may be evil spoken of by some, yet 'tis a Constitution so wise, as suits both Heaven and Earth, I had almost said, Angels as well as Men.

Eightly, *We preach Christ the Wisdom of God, in his appointing Faith to be the Condition of the Covenant of Grace,* *Mark xvi. 16. Acts xvi. 31.* Perhaps this may be a Way of speaking, not very agreeable to some sound Divines, tho' where the real Difference lies between them and other sound Divines, in this particular Question, I am not able to perceive. 'Tis owned by all, that what is required is also promised, that even the very first Grace is the Fruit of Christ's Purchase, and is of free Gift: That Christ giveth not only the Principle of spiritual Action, but the Excitement of that Principle, yea the very Act itself, *Phil. ii. 13.* That tho' the whole Efficiency of Grace is from Christ, yet the Acts of Grace are from a Believer in a vital formal Manner. That there is no Merit in Faith, either *ex pacto*, or any way else: That yet Faith interesteth the Sinner in Christ. What now can be the Difference? Why, one, by Condition, means that which founds his Right to Life; and another,

ther, that which God requireth as a Mean to inter-
rest the Sinner in Christ, and so bring him within
the Bond of the Covenant. The Difference then lies
so intirely in the Meaning of a Word, that a Man,
upon changing the Sense of Terms, must necessarily
change his Side in the Question.

And, O! how admirably is the Grace of Faith fit-
ted for the Business! For besides that it plunges the
Soul into deep and Heart melting Repentance: If the
strongest Impressions of awful *Terror*, or the most
significant Demonstrations of the most intense and
astonishing Love, can do any thing to the rending
or dissolving a Heart of Stone; and besides, that 'tis
a self-denying Grace, causing the Soul to shrink as
into a Point, and to vanish, as it were, before the
Lord, and the Glory of his Grace: Besides all this,
the very formal Nature of Faith lies in its *Recepti-*
bility and *Dependence*. "I have nothing to give unto
" God, says the contrite Soul, and what can I do
" unto him? But may I not receive his offered Mer-
" cy, and depend on his Promise thereof? Work I
" cannot, but to beg and to receive too, at the
" Throne of Grace, I need not be ashamed." And
so the Covenant of Grace is held forth to us, and
proposed in Terms, that suit wonderfully both the
Glory of God, and the Necessities of Men.

This Gospel-method of Salvation, through Faith,
is a Constitution so rational and wise, that suppose a
Deist should hope for Salvation, from the Principles of
natural Religion, it must be in such a Way, as is but a
faint Imitation of the Gospel-scheme. There must be
a Belief of the Divine Mercy, and a resting on it, as
the only Thing that can save him. A Creature, if
knowing itself, cannot be much conceited of his own
Merit; far less can a sinful Creature have the least
Hopes, but in the Mercy of God. Dost thou own
thy self to have sinned, and that there is no less in
every Sin, than a contesting with God about *sove-*
reignty; and a preferring any thing in the World,
yea

yea the worst Thing in it, to the *infinitely perfect Being*, who is the Author of all Goodness: Hast thou a Sense of this? (and stupid thou art if thou hast not) This will lay thee low, and prostrate thee at God's Feet in Contrition, Humiliation and Self-abasement. And thou wilt own thy Need of Mercy, and be altogether hopeless, unless thou can believe and rest upon the same. Well, Mercy thou believest; and it may be, thou thinkest of amending thy Life: For thou canst not think it fit to be said unto God, "Lord have Mercy upon me, tho' I have no Mind to honour thee; or, tho' I am resolved to affront thee. Or, Lord have Mercy upon me, tho' I think nothing to despise thee and thy most sacred Will: Or, tho' I repent not that ever I did Evil, but I am resolved to do Evil before thee continually." Certainly thou knowest, that nothing can be spoken more undecently to a holy God; and that thou canst not set thy Face to the Heavens with such a Prayer in thy Lips. What then? thy Prayer must be, "Lord have Mercy upon me, for I am broken in Spirit for Sin; it repents me to the Heart that ever I did Evil in thy Sight; and wherein I have done Iniquity, I will do so no more." And shall we suppose this to be thy Case? Or, is it a Thing easily supposeable in thee? How can one repent of his Sins, without a supreme Love to God, and a cleaving to him above all Things? Can he hate Sin as the *worst* of Evils, who loves not God as the *best* of Beings? And how can a Notion of Mercy in general, without a clear and satisfying View, how *Mercy and Truth may meet together, and Righteousness and Peace kiss each other*, conciliate true Respect to God, or command the Homage that is due to him? Let us suppose God to be all Mercy, and so taking down the Partition-wall between Heaven and Hell, and making one Event and one Place to the Holy and to the Unholy, to the Godly and to the Profane: How effectually would this stifle all Affection

fection to God, and cast off all Reverence to his Name? Which Reverence and which Love are the total Sum both of our Duty and Happiness, being the correspondent Impression in us of his God-like Excellencies.

But let us suppose, that thou doest truly amend, and that thou sinnest no more for the Time to come: Yet what doest thou say, as to thy bypast Sins? Sin being Treason against the King of Heaven, thereby a new Obligation is contracted, *viz.* to suffer condign Punishment; the former Obligation to Duty remaining eternally in its full Force: And canst thou think that by one Debt, thou canst pay another? Or didst thou never hear of a Divine NEMESIS, a *divine* *, enough to confound thy Hope? Or, what Ground hast thou for this Faith of thine in the Mercy of God, when thou refusest to read it in his Word, and canst not read it in his Works, there being no such Discrimination in the eternal Aspect of Divine Providence, between the Good and the Evil, as is congruous to the final State, either of the one or the other, or can so much as make us guess about the same?

Yet Mercy, thou sayest, thou dependest upon, and thou takest thy Chance of it, and when Death comes, thou jumps into the Dark, thou knowest not whither. But what a listless Worshipper of God wilt thou be all this while? (and Devotion thou wilt not think needless, unless thou can imagine, that God hath dropped thee down on this Earth, to overlook himself; or to bind thee more close to thy Fellow-creatures than to him, on whom thou dependest for thine *All*) I say, how cold, and heartless wilt thou be in all thy devotional Exercises, when thou *runnest so uncertainly, and fighest but as one beating the Air*, neither knowing what thou owest to God, or what thou mayest expect from him? And where hast thou a Discovery of the Nature and State of thy future Hap-

* *Act* xxviii. 4.

Happiness? Without which, how doest thou know by what Dispositions thou canst prepare thy Soul for the same? Would not any Attempt this Way be as one walking without eyeing a Mark; or moving without a Term of Motion?

Ye are heartily welcome to take as much as you please from the *sacred Records*, to form in your Minds right Conceptions of God, and also of a future State. And in the *Name of God*, take also the Way therein chalk'd out unto eternal Life. This would be more generous, than after you have lighted your Candle at the Light of divine Revelation, to go about to extinguish the same.

My Design in all this, as I have told, is to shew, that the Gospel-way of obtaining Favour with God through *Faith*, is so naturally and rationally founded, that even these, who set up only for the Religion of *Nature*, seek Acceptance with God, in some sort, according to this very *plan*; tho' their Religion is defective, not only as it discovers, not so clearly, the glorious Excellencies of God; but also as it manifests not sufficient Grounds to support Hope, nor Light enough to guide us in Duty.

In short, as the *Christian* perceives in himself immediately an immortal Spirit, or a Substance that is not only simple and indivisible, and hence indissoluble, but also quick and active, that can fly in a Moment, with all its Faculties, as high as Heaven: So also, he believes this immortal Spirit must meet with Entertainment suitable in the other World, because a Faculty without an Object is impossible in Nature. He finds also this Spirit within him foreboding an Eternity; and he cannot be persuaded, that the wise and perfect Author of his Being would have made him with Faculties, that should be an Over-match for his intended End: Or, that he has made him, only to delude him. And again, as he cannot persuade himself, that immortal Spirits should change their States, without any *Word* from their Creator, shewing

ing the Connexion between *this* and *that* State; or that a whole Order of Spirits should move out of this World to the next at *random*, or without any *Guide*: So he cannot find any Guide so certain, so clear, and so sufficient, as the *holy Bible*, a Guide so very sure, as that a sincere Compliance with the Directions thereof, doth in the very Nature of the Thing, make an immortal Spirit *necessarily* Happy, whether it be in the Body or out of the Body, or whatever Circumstances it can possibly be in. And further, he thinks the Christian Religion nothing the worse, that a reconciling Mediator steps in, between the offended Majesty of God and, offending Rebels: And, by an *equivalent Satisfaction*, makes it honourable for God to forgive us our Sins, and to save our Souls: (And who ever appeared on Earth, so God-like, and so like the End he came upon, as *Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour*.) Is this Scheme the less worthy of God, that thereby it appears, *that there is none Holy as the Lord, and that Justice and Judgment are the Dwelling-place of his Throne*? Or, is it the less suitable to us, that it ascertains Hope, and influences our Love? The great Springs of Virtue are *Love* and *Hope*: Slacken these, you enervate all the Powers of Virtue, and give a *Loose* to all evil Passions. And there is nothing gives such Life and Vigour to these first Springs of Duty, as a lively Faith in the Incarnation, the Satisfaction for our Sins, and the Justification of our Persons made by the Son of God.

Tenthly, We preach *Christ the Wisdom of God, in that admirable Constitution, of having all the Stock of Believers in his own Hand, and appointing Faith to be the recipient and correspondent Grace, between his Fulness and our Emptiness. All Fulness dwells in him, Col. i. 19. And out of his Fulness we receive Grace for Grace, John i. 16. O excellent! O wise Constitution! The Awfulness of the divine Majesty need not astonish us, nor the Terrors of Justice con-*
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found our weak and misgiving Minds! 'Tis *God incarnate* we immediately apply to! And all our Supplies are treasured up in him! The Stock of Believers is now made sure, being in such a Hand as cannot lose, nor forfeit the same! What made the Covenant of Works so uncertain? Why, the Improvement of habitual Grace in *Adam* depended on his own slippery mutable Will. I think it so far from being inconceivable, that an innocent Creature should make Defection from God; that on the contrary, since Dependence, Mutability, and Infirmary are included formally in the very Notion of a Creature; without a greater Strength than their own, and a Dependence on the same, the most innocent Creature in the World can scarce be conceived to stand. The *Angels* themselves, as needing it, chuse to be *Headed (a)* by *Christ* the Son of God, *Eph. i. 10.* on whom they depend, not only as a Head of *Dominion*, but as a Head of *Influences*; For, we are told, *Col. i. 17.* *That all Things consist by him*, the Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers, mentioned *Ver. 16.* as well as other Things. Yea, *Ver. 20,* *All Things, whether Things in Heaven, or Things on Earth, are said to be reconciled to him:* And the Decom pound *(b)* here, is admirably fitted to the several Purposes meant; being, that it signifies both to reconcile former Enmity, and also to conciliate, or to make a Thing firmly one's own. The plain Meaning of all seems to be this, That all who are in Heaven, will own themselves to be eternal Debtors to the Grace of our *Immanuel* for the same.

And how know we, why one Reason of the Son of God, his chusing to dwell in the human Nature, may not be, because all the Creation, both its material and immaterial Part, doth meet together in Man: And hereby the Deity becomes enjoyable by the Creatures, each of them, according to their Capacity.

(a) ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι (b) αποκαταλλάξαι

ty. The Apostle, *Rom. viii. 19, 20.* speaks of the Hope and Expectation of the whole Creation, upon the Account of our Redeemer and what he has done. The primitive *Fathers*, their saying, That the first Person, or the Father, was always invisible, and that all the Appearances God ever made, were in the Person of the LOGOS (c); their saying, that the LOGOS did assume of old a created Nature, tho' not in a personal Union, according to which he formed the very Body of *Adam*: And their saying, that the *Envy* of the Angels, that the LOGOS should head the Creation, in a lower Nature than their own, was their *Fall* and *Apostasy* from God; seem to point something this Way. And I believe it will puzzle a Man to give a Reason, why, after the Consummation of all Things, and the Ransomed of the Lord are delivered unto his Father, Soul and Body, *without any Wrinkle, and without any Spot*, that yet the Son of God should remain for ever unite unto a created Nature, unless this was necessary to be the eternal *Mean* and *Bond* of Intercourse with the Deity. Were we sure of this Point, it would present to us a very glorious View of our Redeemer; and the vast and extensive Consequences of his Incarnation would immediately appear to every one. But, be this as it will, I am sure, the *Angels* are as humble and as hearty in the *Hallelujahs*, and triumphant Praises of our Redeemer, as any *Saint* in Heaven: As may be seen by their heavenly Songs, in the Book of the *Revelation*. And I am sure that the highest of the *Seraphims*, should they forget their Dependence on *Immanuel*, would soon degenerate into proud *Lucifers*. O! the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wildom and Knowledge of God, in placing all our Strength and Sufficiency in him, who is *God-Man*, whereby
Grace

(c) The unlearned Reader is to know, that by LOGOS is meant the second Person of the God-head called by the Apostle *John* LOGOS, or the Word. And hence the primitive *Fathers*, usually called *Jesus Christ* by that Name.

Grace and Glory are effectually entailed and secured!

And that *Faith* is appointed to be the *Mean* of receiving from Christ, never was there any Thing better contrived! Of all Ways possible, this is the Chief! Yea, what other Way was possible? How can there be Giving without Receiving, the Terms being Correlates? Or, how can the Blessings of Christ be ours, without Appropriation? Since to appropriate, and make ours, are convertible Terms. And 'tis Faith's *Idiom* to say, *My Lord and my God, my Prince and my Saviour, my Strength, my Rock, my Deliverer, &c.* It peculiarizeth its Object, and makes a Sweet Monopoly of it.

Here again sound *Divines* speak, as if they differed from one another, tho' where the Difference lies, is not easy to conceive. I suppose it is owned by all, That the Essence of justifying Faith stands not in a Man's believing that his Sins are pardoned, but in his receiving and resting on Christ for Remission of Sins: For what Reason hast thou to believe thy Sins are pardoned, more than any other Man, till thou hast first believed in Christ for the Remission of Sins? And again it will be owned, that where there is no Certainty of Evidence, the Soul can have a Certainty of Adherence, Dependence and Recumbency: And that 'tis of the Nature of Faith to reach towards Assurance, and in Part to attain it; that Doubting is not of its Nature, but is the Infirmary that cleaves to it; yea further, that where there is Strength and Clearness in the direct Acts, it will necessarily infer the Reflex Act; for tho' to believe and to know that I believe, are distinct Acts, yet where the direct Act is clear and pointed, the Reflection upon it will follow. 'Tis true indeed, that in Matters I do not distinctly know, or judge of little Importance to me, I may know them, and not know, or, at least, not mind that I know them; but if I clearly know, and assuredly be-

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lieve what I reckon is of the last Consequence to me, I cannot but know that I know, and that I believe the same. So that it must be some Weakness in the direct Acts of Faith, that hinders our Sense and Assurance thereof.

This Dispute is, as if one were saying, That 'tis Essential to Grace to be sinless; because the Spirit of God, the Author of Grace, can never be the Author of Sin. Why, says another, this cannot be, for Grace is imperfect while on Earth, and Sin cleaves to the best. Who sees not that all this would be a Strife only about Words?

Lastly, *We preach Christ the Wisdom of God, in the Connexion he hath established between Grace and Glory; 2 Cor. iii. 18.* A Connexion so close and necessary, that one runs into the other: Grace being Glory in its Bud or *Embrio*, and Glory being Grace in the Flower and Perfection. Glory in its full Extent, what is it? 'Tis the clear Vision of God, full Assimilation to him, and perfect Joy and Satisfaction in him: All which is begun here, in the Illumination of our Minds, the Renovation of our Wills, and in our Soul's full and hearty Acquiescence in God manifested to us in Christ. Yea there is not a particular Grace, whether of Humility, Self-denial, Resignation, Reverence, &c. but as it is perfected in Heaven, so it bears a Part of the Glory there, and heightens their Happiness and Praises. How deep is the *Humility*, and *Self-denial* of the People triumphant above? What else do they mean, by their *casting down their Crowns before the Lamb, and him that sits on the Throne*? Do not they acknowledge by this, that they count not upon any Excellency as their own? That they hold all of Christ, as the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *First* and the *Last*, and the *All* of their Happiness and Glory? And nothing can hinder this from being eternally delightful, but a Spice of that diabolical Pride, that was long since banished from Heaven. And how full and perfect is their *Resignation* to God? *Rev. iv.*

For

For thy Pleasure, say they, we are and were created:
 " It was not Indigence that moved thee to make us,
 " for we are as no Body in thy Sight; but for the
 " Pleasure thou hadst of manifesting thy Self, and thy
 " overflowing Goodness: And lo! we have no more
 " to do now, but to live for ever on thy All-suffici-
 " ency, and with full Conquiescence and Satisfacti-
 " on in thy good Pleasure." O what eternal Ease,
 Rest, Joy and Transport will there be in the Sense
 and Prospect of this! And again, how awful (tho'
 at the same Time serene and transporting) is their Ve-
 neration of the Beauty and Glory of the Lord! What
 else do the Angels mean, by their covering their Fa-
 ces, Isa. vi. before the bright and dazzling Holiness of
 God? And 'tis not a mean, but an Angelic Pleasure,
 which the Glorified find in that awful Seriousness and
 Composure of Mind, which a bright View of God
 forms in their Spirits. O! How serene and serious
 is the Joy of this! 'Tis like the smooth Face of a se-
 rene Sky, but yet strikes their Hearts with a strong,
 vital, and transforming Energy.

And so we might go through every other particu-
 lar Grace, and shew how every one of them partici-
 pates of Heaven's Glory: And that the Consummati-
 on of *this*, is but the Perfection of *these*; so natural
 is the Connexion between Grace and Glory. So that
 when God establishes a Law, *That the unrighteous*
and the unholy shall not enter into the Kingdom of
Heaven, he is but telling us what is the Nature of
 Things: 'Tis the imposing of no new Law, but what
 the Nature of Things imposes. 'Tis but telling us,
 That he does not confound Light and Darkness,
 Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, Heaven and Hell:
 But as the essential Differences between these will be
 eternally kept up in the other World, so also their
 essentially different Effects. I do not say, there is no
 other Punishment in Hell, but the natural penal Ef-
 fects of Sin: I have told before, there is an Inflicti-
 on of Punishment from the Hand of the Supreme

Judge. But I am shewing that the Righteous Judge of all the Earth, proceeds according to the Intrinsick, eternal and immutable Reasons, or Essences of Things.

I conclude this Discourse with a few Inferences.

I. Inference. Let us all endeavour through Grace, to find *Christ* in us the *Power* of God, and the *Wisdom* of God, in cleansing our Souls, mortifying our Corruptions, breaking the Power of Sin, subduing our Lusts and Passions, inlighning our Minds, vivifying our Spirits, strengthening our Hearts against all Temptations, and comforting our Souls against all Discouragements. O! May we feel the Spirit of Christ always in us, as a *Spirit of Love, Power, and of a sound Mind; a Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding; a Spirit of Counsel and Might; a Spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of the Lord!* Alas! When there is little or no inward Sense of Soul, correspondent to the Doctrine we deliver; when it has not Efficacy upon our own Hearts and Lives; how burdensome is the Lord's Work in our Hands! We tugg as at the Oar, in unassisted Duties, straitened in our Spirits, straitened in our Expressions. But, if we feel a deep and secret Energy in our Hearts, answerable to the Truths we deliver, this will clear the Head, elevate the Thoughts, fire the Affections, and fit us both for studying and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in such a Manner, as we shall both *save our own Souls,* and some of *those that hear us.*

II. Inference. Let us preach CHRIST. Let Christ be the Sum and Substance of our Discourses, in whom all the Promises are *Yea* and *Amen.* And through whose Grace only, we can perform any Duty. Let the Doctrine of Christ be interwoven in all the Truths we deliver. It must be owned, That it was the preaching of Christ that was once the most powerful Mean of converting the World: And it cannot be denied, that the World, at this Time, needs Con-

version

version as much as ever. *Tho' the Cross of Christ should be a stumbling Block to the Jews, and Foolishness to the Greeks: Tho' it should be scandalous and distastful to some Persons, tainted with Prejudice; and strange and incredible to others, blinded with Self-conceit; Yet God forbid we should rejoice in any Thing, save in the Cross of Christ, the most powerful and persuasive Mean to crucify us to the World, and the World to us.*

III. Inference. Let us preach *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* Let us so preach him, as that our Faith may not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God. 'Tis true, we are to study a suitable Mixture of the Rational and Pathetick in our Discourses: Yet so as not to make Reason the Measure and Standard of our Faith. For, when Reason hath stretched itself to its uttermost, it is not proportioned to supernatural Objects. Reason does enough, if, by any Illustrations, it can shew that the Mysteries of our holy Religion are not unreasonable. But, if Reason, when it cannot frame a Conceit, commensurate to the Height, Length, and Depth of Gospel Mysteries, shall think to bring them down to its own inferior Capacity, and so, tho' it deny not a divine Revelation, yet, by putting a low and flat Sense upon the Mysteries revealed, goes about to dispirit or explain them away: In such a Case, it denies Christ to be the *Power, and Wisdom of God.* To think, with some of our Metaphysicians, *that nothing is possible, but what we can conceive*, is to make the human Intellect the very Standard of the Power and Wisdom of God. I think our Reason should be very modest in its Decisions about Possibilities and Impossibilities: Especially, since it has often happened in natural Things, (Reason's proper Province) that what has been thought impossible by some, has been demonstrated to be true by others. Dost thou say, that thou wilt not believe any thing to be possible, but what thou

thou canst conceive, or what thou thinkest not attended with insuperable Difficulties? Go, try this Rule of thine in any one of God's essential Perfections: Try to get a positive Conception of his *Immensity*, how he is *totus in toto*, and *totus in qualibet mundi parte*; how he is *wholly here, and wholly in another Place*. Get a positive Notion of an *Eternity*, without any Succession in the Duration. Try what Conceit thou hast of *Infinity*; and whether the Term does not necessarily import, that it transcends thy Conception? Or, if, for this Reason, thou wilt not believe there is a *God*, because thou canst not comprehend him; then reconcile these two Terms together, **INFINITE, MATTER**: Or, if infinite Matter appear too bulky to grasp within a Thought, let it alone, and confine thy Thoughts to the supposed Powers, and Affections of thy supposed eternal Matter; and essay to reconcile these inconsistent Propositions; *Matter is thoughtless, and yet the productive Cause of all Intelligences: Matter is stupid, and yet infinite in all possible Perfections*. Or, try to join these two *Ideas* together, **UNACTIVE, CAUSE**: Or, if thou cannot get such Propositions and Terms as these to meet any nearer, than the two Ends of a Contradiction, but still thou wantest Satisfaction as to that material World of thine; go, chafe it close in thy Thoughts, till it vanish out of thy Sight. Or cast up only an *Ideal* Existence, or be in Hazard of being lost, even when 'tis among thy Fingers, and besets thee on all Sides. Or, at least, come not to a positive Resolution, of either knowing all Mysteries, or not believing them, till thou findest any one Thing in Nature, suppose it were a Pile of Grains, which thou comprehendest, and can explain all the *Phænomena* thereof. And yet for all this, thou needst not throw away thy *Reason*, as if it were an useless Thing, but may be abundantly well conceited of thy Intellectuals, tho' thou shouldst confess *That God is wiser than Man*.

IV. Inference. Let us preach *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. Let us preach *Christ not with the enticing Words of Mens Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*. 'Tis true, a contemptible Lowness of Speech, or to deliver the Truths of the Gospel, in a rude and slovenly Manner, is to debase the Majesty of the Word of God. But to be labouring on in Stile, and giving out all our Words, Sentences and Periods, as in Weight and Measure, however this may suit a Declaimer, I am not so well satisfied that it suits a Gospel Minister, labouring for the Salvation of Souls. I am not at all against a just Commendation of Stile; without all Doubt, Eloquence is beautiful, charming and enticing; (and they are lucky to whom it is natural.) But there are several Things, that may discourage from an operose Labour about Stile. Who knows, but the Eloquence that makes a Discourse more pleasant, may not sometimes render it less powerful? We often see, that 'tis one Thing to amuse, and another Thing to move. And how hard is the Hearer oftentimes put to it, to separate what's real from the Phantoms of Imagination! And, if we may judge by Events, so far as we can perceive them, we'll be tempted to think *that manly Truths delivered, as Bates speaks of Baxter, with a noble Negligence of Stile, may be as successful for the obtaining of the Ends of our Ministry*. I am not sure whether a scrupulous Regard to Accuracy in Stile may not sometimes check that Strength of Thought, and Passion too, that may be more useful both to Speaker and Hearer, than any tedious Accuracy. And again, I know not if the Rules of Eloquence be to this Day fully adjusted. Some of the primitive Fathers were celebrated for the Variety of their Figures, the Justness of their Comparisons, and the Agreeableness of their Descriptions and Narrations. The eastern Nations did, and to this Day do express themselves in great Images, bold Metaphors, big and pompous Terms: And perhaps this will

will please best, where People are led mainly by their Senses, and cannot judge by Principles, or lay hold on abstract Notions of the Mind. The *Ciceronian* Stile now obtains the Vogue in thir Parts of the World, becaute of its Naturalness, Easiness and Plainness; which yet in the Age next to himself, was censured as an Iron-stile. I intend all this only against an *operose* Labour about Stile, to the too much forcing or hampering of Nature. And what I mean, plainly is I would have every Man, in his own Dialect, to *preach Christ, and speak of the wonderful Works of God*; some in their polite, smoooth, running Stile; others in their strong, sinewy and masculine Stile; and others with that Spirit and Vivacity, that cannot endure to be checkt or fettered: And let each improve his own *Idiom*. So we find the Divine *Penmen* of the Sacred Oracles differing each in his Stile, and each excelling in his own Peculiarity, and every one of them the best in his own Kind. (For tho' some of our Gram-
 marians carp at the Scriptural Stile, they do but make it evident that themselves have not overmuch Skill in true Criticism.) And 'tis certain, that Men must as necessarily vary in their Stile, as they differ in the Variety of their Pulse, or in the Calmness or Rapidity of their Spirits. So that 'tis impossible, that the same Standard should suit every one; nor would it seem to quadrate with the infinite Variety of Divine Providence, nor with the various Necessities of Men, nor, as I think, with the general Edification of Souls.

V. Inference. *Let us preach Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.* Let us in a particular Manner demonstrate Him to be the *power* of God, and the *Wisdom* of God. General Discourses commonly have but little Effect: They produce only a general Love to God, to Christ, or to his People. 'Tis a Mistake of the Ungodly, if they think, they love any Thing

Thing particularly in God; no, they love not so much as his *Mercy*, but their own Mishapen *Idea* of the same: For, to love his Mercy is to love him, as saving us from Misery, and yet they would be indulged in Sin, comprehensive in its Nature of all Misery. And as little do they love any particular Excellency in *Jesus Christ*: They love him not even as a *Saviour*; they would love him only, if he would save them in their Sins: The plain Sense of which is, They would love him, if he were not a Saviour; or if he were any Thing else but a Saviour. And sicklike, their Love to the People of God is only in general; but as to this, or that particular Saint, they cannot love him; only they say, *Be ye warmed, and filled, notwithstanding, give them not these Things which are needful to the Body*: And so all their Love is only to some Metaphysick Saints in the Clouds, or some abstracted Notions of *Sainthood*. And this is the Effect commonly of General Discourses, that People rest only in some fine Notions, without any Sense of the vital, lightning Power of the Word. But, as I conceive, 'tis the plain, particular, downright preaching of the Word, the laying it open in plain Terms to the Mind, and laying it hard to the very Conscience by Exhortation, Rebuke, Comfort, &c. that most usually makes the Hearer wise unto Salvation.

Last Inference. Let us preach *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*. Let the Doctrine of Christ's being the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God, enlighten and invigorate all the Points of *Morality* we press upon our People. 'Tis certain, *that Morality* is an essential Part of Religion: For a Person to pretend to much devotional Exercise, and yet allow himself to be sensual, intemperate, incontinent, covetous, unjust, oppressive, malicious, proud, censorious, merciless, &c. Or, to live in the Love of any known Sin, is to boast of a Religion, that cannot profit himself, nor can any other be the better of it.

But

But then the strongest Motives to all Moral Duties, are from Christ: And the only sufficient Aid is in him: And 'tis Faith that is, the animating Principle. What is true Morality? 'Tis a dutiful Behaviour to God, not only as *Creatures*: I doubt there is here a Source of some Errors; many consider themselves simply as *Creatures*, and hence 'tis nothing with them, but *up and be doing*: But why should we not consider ourselves as really we are? And consider our State as really it is? Is there not a moral Fitness in all this? And what are we? We are *Creatures*, and we are *fallen Creatures*: And true Morality has a Respect to what is to be done in the present Circumstances we are in. Hence, I say, true Morality is our dutiful Behaviour to God, not only as *Creatures*, but as *lapsed* *Creatures*: Where both doing, and Strength for doing are wanting: And, where, tho' we should do well for the future, we cannot make amends for what is past. What Place can there then be for true Morality without Faith in Christ, as the Power of God and the Wisdom of God? 'Tis an Article even of natural Religion, That *without Faith, 'tis impossible to please God*: And 'tis an Article of revealed Religion, That *without Christ*, John xv. 5. *ye can do nothing*. So that however gloriously and Magnificently some Men may talk of moral Virtues, only from the Principles of natural Religion; yet we have Reason to think, they are but apish Imitations of Virtue, some Shadows of Morality, some shriveled Parcels, without any co-herent System, or co-herent Frame, if they are done without any Regard to Christ: Or, at least, without any Influence from him; and especially where the Gospel is preached. For, whether, as the Sun by his Beams, spreads a dawning Light, while the Body of the Sun is not seen; so the *Sun of Righteousness* may scatter his Rays, where himself is not personally known: And whether those Persons, on whom his Light in this manner shines, may rejoice in

in his Light, improve it, and be thankful to the Author of it, whoever he be, thus *worshipping an unknown God*. And whether such Persons as these, upon the Account of Christ's Satisfaction to divine Justice, may be admitted to some lower, and less light-some Mansions in Heaven, are Points we cannot say any Thing about. Only with respect to all that have Opportunity of hearing the Gospel, I tell you again, in Christ's Words, that without Christ, * or without a vital Union with Christ, and a lively Faith in him, ye can do nothing: 'Tis eternally impossible that ye can.

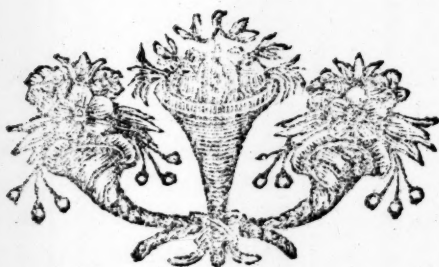
And, O! How wise! How excellent and orderly is the whole Plan of the Gospel! The Grace of Faith gives us a Sight of him, who is invisible, and presents to us his most awful Attributes, to the filling of our Souls with Fear: And, at the same time, points to the Incarnation, and Sufferings of the Son of God, as a Ground of Hope. Hence follow ingenious Contrition and Repentance for Sin: Hence deep Humility and Self-abasement: Hence a pleasing Admiration of Redeeming Grace: And hence fervent Love to God, and the blessed Redeemer: Hence sincere and universal Love to our Neighbours; which Love to our Fellow-creatures, is not a moral Act, unless it flow from Love to God, and a Regard to his Commandments; For, *1 John v. 2. Hereby we know that we love the Children of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments*: And hence again follows unlimited Obedience, the generous Principle of Love enlarging the Heart for all the Duties of Holiness, Righteousness and Charity. And a Man needs no more to be clear of this Scheme, but to consider his present Posture God-wards, or to bethink himself,

“ I

* *Χρησις ἐμὴ* *seorsum a me*, being of stronger Import than *ἀπὸ ἐμῶν*.

“ I am a *Creature*, I am a *revolted Creature*, and
“ I am now a *returning Creature*; and, if I re-
“ turn, it must be in the *Way* wherein I can be ac-
“ cepted; and I can be accepted only in *Christ*, and
“ by *Faith* in Him.” And all Praise, Honour and
Glory unto our God, who makes us accepted in
the Beloved. *Amen.*

F I N I S.



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OR, THE Soul's Progress to HEAVEN; IN THE

Several Steps whereby it ascends from DEEP
DISTRESS and MISERY, to the Height
of TRIUMPH and GLORY.

By Mr. WILLIAM CRAWFORD Minister of
the Gospel at *Wiltoun*.

JER. l. 4, 5. *In those Days, and in that Time, the Children of Israel shall come, they and the Children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the Way to Zion with their Faces thitherward.*

PSAL. lxxxiv. 7. *They shall go from Strength to Strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.*

HEB. xi. 14, 16. *And confessed they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth. And they that say such Things, declare plainly that they seek a better Country, that is, an heavenly: Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a City.*

2 COR. ii. 14. *Now Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.*

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THE
EPISTLE Dedicatory,
UNTO

The People of *Wiltoun* Parish, my Flock.

Dearly Beloved,

THe' the Business of our everlasting Salvation be the greatest Concern, and of the most awful Importance; yet there is scarce any other Business among Men so generally neglected, or so indistinctly managed.

Some seldom think they have immortal Souls within them, or Souls of such Value as to deserve the Main of their Care.

Others cannot be convinced, that Sin is so horridly evil, or that their State by Nature is so wretchedly miserable, as the Word of God represents it to be.

Others that have some Thought about their Souls, and some Sense of their Estate, yet, what through Ignorance, and what through Confusion of Thought, rest only in Generals, and never come to a distinct setting of Matters between God and their Souls. Hence they can tell little, either of their present or future State, but only of a general Hope, without being able to pitch on the Grounds of their Hope.

Others again are held off by the Sense of their Unworthiness from accepting the offered Grace; saying with Distrust, what Solomon said with believing Admiration,

tion, Will God indeed dwell with Man! Will he dwell with such a sinful Man as I am!

Others apprehend, that the clearing of their State God-wards is a Matter of such Difficulty, because of the Intricacy and Deceitfulness of the Heart, as is next to being inattainable. And 'tis a Question, Whether Presumption on Mercy, when in a bad State, or little Hope of ever being in a better, has been the Ruin of most Souls: Tho' it be no Question, but the most Part of all who perish under the Gospel, make Shipwreck on the one or the other of these Rocks. And others cloathe their Religion all in Black, counting nothing so but mourning, fasting, and religious Severities; as if holy Joy and Delightation in God, were to bear no Part in true Religion. Hence a lumpish and uncheerful Service is offered to God and the Soul moves heavily and heartlessly in the Way to Heaven.

Others again, though they will make some Steps towards Religion, because pressed by some Exigency of Conscience, or some eminent Danger, or some general Apprehension of the Excellency of Religion: Yet, not being animated with the Hope of Glory, they do not put on Strength, or exert themselves; or, if their Motions be strong, yet they are not regular, because not aiming at the true Mark, but are religious at random.

This small Treatise offers some Help, such as it is, to these several Exigencies of Souls, and particularly to your Souls, Dearly Beloved, whose Necessities are mainly here considered. O may the God of all Grace bless these weak and poor Endeavours for your Salvation! And because there is as much Infidelity in the World, and perhaps lurking in some Professors Hearts, as would ascribe the most perfective Operations in our Minds, rather to any Cause, than the Spirit of God, we have taken Occasion, so far as is consistent with the Nature of this Discourse, to vindicate, in some Particulars, these spiritual Exercises, from the Despite that some would

do to them and the Spirit of Grace, the Author of them.

'Tis the building up of your Souls in Faith and Holiness, unto eternal Life, that we would fain, through Divine Assistance, aim at; and therefore have ventured upon the publishing of this, though there be nothing to recommend it to any critical Reader, except perhaps the general Purpose of it, which is to present a short View of the methodical Procedure of a gracious Soul, from his first Thoughts of setting out in the Way to Heaven, till he enter the same.

Not as if we meant to stint the Spirit of God to one Measure or Method; particularly as to the Terrors and hard Exercises here described, as introductive to the Soul's taking hold of God's Covenant. 'Tis certain, that the Lord is not tied to any set Measure, but such hard Exercises are restrained or enlarged, shortened or lengthened, as his infinite Wisdom sees most fit. But we are persuaded, that the Lord causeth Distress in every Soul, more or less, that he designs to bring to himself: And the less there is of this in the first, there is oft-times the more of it in the second Conversion. And what less upon the Matter is there in every true Conviction, without which there is no Conversion, than what is here described? Indeed some are so suddenly wrought upon by the Spirit of God, as that they have scarce Leisure to observe the several Steps, and methodical Operations of the Spirit in them, or yet the orderly Progress of their own Souls. In others the Business is lengthened out in such slow, but sure Steps, (which happens especially in educational Conversions) as that in such more remote, though apt, Connections of one Thing with another, the Progress, through the Non-attention and Unsteadiness of their Minds, is often not distinctly observed.

Yet who is a true Convert, that sees not Sin to be a horrible Evil? And sees not the dreadful Vengeance of God impending over the Head of every impenitent Sinner?

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ner? Or, who is the true Convert, that is not divorced in his Heart from Lusts and Idols? Or is not brought to despair of Salvation by his own Righteousness? Or does not see an absolute Need of Christ? Or is not brought to prize Christ above all Things; and admire free Grace, and consent to the Terms on which it is offered?

But to enlarge would be inconsistent with the Brevity we have studied through the whole, for your Ease and Convenience.

Dearly Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,

That by sure Steps we may all travel Heaven-ward, till we meet together there, to our mutual and eternal Joy, is the Design, in short, of this little Book; and that the Lord may bless it for this End, is the earnest Prayer of,

Your Servant in the Work of the Gospel,

WILL. CRAWFORD.



Zion's

Zion's TRAVELLER: OR,

The Soul's Progress to Heaven :

*In the several Steps whereby it ascends
from deep Distress and Misery to the
Height of Triumph and Glory.*

*The Introduction, giving a short View of Man's
State before Grace reach his Soul.*



MAN is sinful from the Womb, conceived in Sin, and brought forth in Iniquity (a). Sin is ingrained in his Nature, and twisted in his Constitution and Frame; and this through the Apostasy of Adam, our federal Head, and natural Root, in whose Person was the whole Stock of human Nature, which is transmitted to us as tainted in him (b). And what Child did ever more resemble his Parent, than all Adam's natural Posterity resemble him? Was Adam for trying whether or not he could be happy another Way than God had appointed and commanded? And is not this the natural Disposition of all Mankind? They are for trying whether or not the World can be a Portion, and Happiness for Souls: And so they address this and the other Creature with Passion and Fondness; and all they gain is but Loss and Harm: And after a thousand Disappointments, and frustrated
A Hopes,

(a) Psal. li. 5. (b) Rom. v. 12, 19.

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Zion's

Hopes, whereby 'tis apparent, That *this their Way is their Folly*, yet *their Posterity approve their Sayings* (a); and will make new Essays and Experiments, for the obtaining of an Happiness in worldly Things, as if none had ever been frustrated before them. Did *Adam* prefer sensual Pleasures to all the Consolations of God's Favour and Love? And is not this the natural Temper of all his Children? Are they not *Lovers of their sensual Pleasures more than Lovers of God* (b)? And is not this comprehensive of all Corruption and Sin; being, that the Soul's embracing the Creature instead of the Creator, is its very spiritual Pollution, whereby it goes a whoring from God? Again, The Creature's interposing, and rending the Soul from God, its only Life and Happiness; is not this the Source of all its Woes, yea, in its self comprehensive of all Wants and Miseries? Again, Did *Adam* run away to hide himself from the Presence of the Lord? And is not the same Spirit in all his Children? Is it not evident, that every Man by Nature hath not only lost his God, but also has no Heart to return unto him, but imagines he may be safe and comfortable, tho' estranged from God; at least, he is unwilling to believe his great Need of him, till a Word immediately from God, alarm his *Soul*, and awaken his *Fear*, as it did to *Adam*?

O what a melancholly View here presents itself, of the deplorable State of human Nature! Man is become universally depraved, and polluted with Sin: He's vilely averse to God, and rebellious against him: He thinks nothing to affront the *Majesty*, and invade all the *sacred Rights* of the Deity, affecting to be as God. He neither values the *Kindness* of God, nor dreads much his *Displeasure*: And though he hears of the Arm of God's Power, and the Terrors of his Justice; yet, like *Leviathan*, he laughs at such Spears as would offer to pierce him: And tho' he be told of Death and Destruction, yea, that he is on the very Sides of the Pit, and Confines of Hell, nothing being between but the brittle Thread of Life, which soon may be snap'd

(a) Psal. xlix. 13. (b) 2 Tim. iii. 4.

in Pieces; yet he flatters himself with the Thoughts of Impunity, and says, *That no Evil shall come near him, but that he shall have Peace, tho' the Lord tells him, that he will not spare him, but his Wrath shall smoke against him, and burn him to the lowest Hell (a).*

I. *A Thought of the Soul upon its own sad State.*

WHAT a State is this my *Soul* is in? Shall I rest in such a wretched Condition as I am in by Nature? Can I bear up under the horrible Guilt of all my Sins; a Weight which would crush me to the lowest Hell? Shall the Curse of the Law prey upon my Soul, and be eternally eating out its Vitals? Can it be easy for me to *underly* the Wrath of an Almighty God? Am I a Match for Omnipotence? Or prepared to *run against the thick Bosses of his Buckler*? Or, shall I, *saith the Soul*, rather chuse to ly eternally under the Strokes of his *Wrath*, than be obliged to him for his *Grace*? And rather than accept of the Consolations of his Love, chuse to live under the horrid Views, and ill boding Fears of his infinite Vengeance - What's thy Thoughts of these Things, *O my Soul*? Darest thou equally value the Favour and the Displeasure of the Almighty God? Is it alike to thee, whether to be eternally beloved or abhorred of the Lord? Or, whether thou be eternally joyful in Heaven, or eternally tormented in Hell? Is it all one to thee, whether the Flames of Divine Wrath shall eternally flash on thee? Or, whether thou shalt be eternally solaced with the infinitely amiable, and ravishing Countenance of the Glorious God? Or hast thou a Mind, by a Course of Impenitency, to prefer the Terrors of Reprobates, and the Torments of Devils, before all the inexpressible Joys, and Raptures of glorious Angels, and glorified Saints?

A 2

II. *When*

(a) Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

II. *When the Man begins to take Thought, there will be a more stated Soliloquy with his Soul about its eternal Concerns.*

Why, O my Soul, has it been so long e'er thou hast bethought thy self in Matters that so vastly and eternally concern thee? Why hast thou never before now considered what's thy *Nature*, how great is thy *Capacity*, and how long is thy *Duration*? Art not thou a spiritual Substance, that cannot be fed with Corn, or enriched with Gold? O my precious Soul; would not Heaven, and the beholding the Divine Glory there, best suit thy Nature, and answer thy Capacities? O my immortal Soul, shalt thou not survive the Funerals of the Body, and when Death comes, take a silent and undiscerned Flight into the unseen World; being either carried by Angels into Abraham's Bosom, or else dragged by Devils into Hell? O my Soul, why hast thou not been at any suitable Care to prevent thy eternal Destruction, and to possess eternal Life and Happiness? Why hast thou not repented of Sin, fled to the Mediator, and closed with the Terms of the Covenant? Why art thou yet rolling some Sin under thy Tongue? Why is there yet some Idol thou canst not part with, or some Duty thou canst not comply with? O my Soul, wilt thou forfeit thy Happiness, and lose thy self for ever, for the Pleasures of Sin that are but for a Season? O my Soul, shall I prefer the vile Gratification of sensual Lusts before thy pure, noble, and endless Happiness? O my Soul, have I no Use for thee, but to make thee a Drudge to the Body, and a Slave to its Lusts? Is this my Kindness to thee, my better Part? Shall I venture a Soul, and lose it for ever, for the Sake of a brutish and momentary Satisfaction? Let this be far from me, to use such unnatural Cruelty to my own Soul; lest I come to wish in vain, *Would to God I had died for thee*, my Soul; I wish I had died Ten thousand Deaths for thee, my Soul, my Soul, my Soul.

III. *When*

III. *When in such a Soliloquy, Matters are presented close to the Mind by the Spirit of God, there will be a sharp Expostulation of the Soul about its former Ways.*

Why dost thou, O Man, sin against God, and wrong thine own Soul? Is this well done in thee, to scorn infinite Majesty, despise infinite Goodness, and ruin thy self eternally? If *uncreaturally* thou regardest not God, that hath made and preserved thee, yet why *unnaturally* art thou regardless of thine own self? And what should move thee to destroy thy Soul for ever? *What will it profit a Man, should he gain the whole World, and lose his Soul (a)?* What is left to a Man when his Soul is lost? Or what is gained, when the Gainer himself is eternally undone? If the Favour of God, if Communion with him in Blessedness, if eternal Happiness be lost, what hast thou after this, O my Soul? Or what Equivalent can there be for such an irreparable Loss? Can the whole World be a sufficient Compensation for the Loss of a Soul? Can it keep out of Hell? Try first if it can keep off Sickness, or hinder the Strokes of Death. Can it give any Relief or Refreshment to the Damned? Why then could *Dives* neither buy nor borrow a Drop of cold Water to cool the Tip of his Tongue, that was tormented in these Flames (b)? Or can it purchase a Room among the Blessed? *But let that Man perish, and his Money with him, who thinks any Gift of God, much more his great Gift of eternal Life, can be purchased with Money (c).* Or losing Heaven, and all its Happiness, will worldly Gain, or worldly Honour, or worldly Pleasure, be a sufficient Equivalent for that irretrievable Loss? *But knowest thou not, O my Soul, since Man was placed of old upon the Earth, that the triumphing of the Wicked is short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a Moment; for tho' his Excellency mount up to the Heavens, and his Head reach unto the Clouds, yet he shall perish for ever like his own Dung; and they which have*

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seen

(a) Matth. xvi. 26. (b) Luke xvi. 24. (c) Acts viii. 20.

seen him, shall say where is he (a)? They spend their Days in Wealth, and in a Moment go down to the Grave (b). And when he dieth, he shall carry nothing away, his Glory shall not descend after him (c).

But were it true, O my Soul, which is yet impossible, that the Profits of the World, and the Pleasures of Sin were as durable as the Joys of Heaven; yet, O how absurd and stupid, as well as impious and horrid, would it be, to prefer the Service of Sin before the Service of God, and chuse rather to graze among Beasts, than ascend into Heaven, and partake of eternal and angelick Delights!

IV. *The Soul in Horror and Confusion, because of its Sin and Folly.*

What is this! *says the now awakened Soul: To be honourable here, and miserable hereafter; rich here, and for ever rejected hereafter; jolly and merry here, and howling and schrieking among the Damned for ever hereafter! O Terrors! O Horrors! And what less can I look for, while in this State, than the fiery Indignation of an angry God? And do not the lightening Flashes of Terror already flee in my Face, and the very Sparks of Hell compass me about? For how extreme is my Fault in affronting the Most High God, in fulying his Glory, and trampling upon his Laws? And how black is the Pollution wherewith my Soul is stained? O what Pride; what Earthliness; and what Sensuality have reigned in my Soul! O how horrible is the Vigor of my Sins, and how envenomed has the Malignity of my Heart been! Who could have imagined that such Folly could be bound up in Man's Heart? Certainly my Heart, says the awakened Sinner, has been a Span of the foulest Abominations, and brimful of the Poison of Hell: Dragons and Devils have dwelt there, Owls and Satyrs have danced there, and unclean Birds have nested there. Unto me there belongs nothing but Shame and Confusion (d),*
Horror

(a) Job xx. 4, 5, 6, 7. (b) Job xxi. 13. (c) Psal. xlix. 13.
(d) Dan. ix. 8,

Horror and Misery. O, my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my Face to thee, O God, for mine Iniquities are increased over mine Head, and my Trespas is grown up unto the Heavens (a). My Sins are as a heavy Burden, they are too heavy for me (b).

V. *A very rueful Reflection of Soul, and a wishing to retract its Faults.*

O it cuts me to the Quick, says the broken-hearted Sinner, with bitter and afflictive Resentment, that I should have so vilely debased my Soul, in preferring corruptible Flesh to incorruptible Happiness: Or in preferring Earth to Heaven. And as if all this were too little, I have preferred such a vile Thing as Sin, before the infinitely amiable God, and lovely Redeemer. O impious and horrid to the uttermost! I have been a Traitor to God, and mine own Soul, I have been a Fool, a mad Man, a Beast before thee, O Lord. O that it had been otherwise with me! How happy had I been, if I had rather been suffering than sinning, says the penitent Soul! I retract my Faults; and O that I could undo them! O that I could weep them out by brinish Tears; wring them out by bitter Sorrow, and rid my self from them by heart-rending Contritions! But alas! saith the contrite Soul, I am appalled with Sin, as a Burden above my Strength, and as a Load so nailed to my Bones, as that I cannot disburden my self; it sinks as a venomed Dart in my Soul, and the Arrows of God's Wrath stick with it. Oh! I am amazed and astonished to think how light and jolly I have been, when the horrible Pollution of original Sin hath stained all the Powers and Faculties of my Soul! And when by my innumerable actual Transgressions, I have infinitely provoked God, and brought my Soul within a Hair's Breadth of Hell! Oh! I see now, and detest that infinite Stupidity and Sotishness, that possessed my Soul, when bold and venturous to dishonour God, violate his Law, and incur his infinite Displeasure!

A 4

Oh,

(a) Ezra ix, 6. (b) Psal. xxxviii. 4.

Oh, what would I not give, that this had never been! And now, what would I not do, and what would I not suffer, that my Sins might be altogether *obliterated*; might not only be *pardoned*, but also *nullified*; and might not only not *reign*, but not *be*!

VI. *The awakened Soul cannot believe that such Distresses of Conscience, upon Apprehension of Sin and Misery, are melancholly Vapours.*

Is it not evident, *saith the thoughtful Soul*, that Men of the most sober Reason, and penetrating Judgment, have felt these inward Terrors, because of Sin; as *Job* (a), *Heman* (b), and *David* (c), whose ruddy Cheeks, and Inclination to Musick, seem to be Symptoms rather of a sanguine than a melancholick Constitution. And is it not agreeable to the highest Reason, that it should be so? Who is the Person that allows himself to think on the Majesty, Holiness, and Justice of God, who is not convinced that there is an extreme Malignity, and an eternal Indecency in sinning against him? Or is not affected with the infinite Fault, the vile Pollution and horrible Guilt there is in affronting the Divine Majesty? Sure it is only these who think not at all, or think but slightly, who can think it a light Thing to offend God, and break his Laws. And how often hath it happened in the Experience of gracious Souls, that these inward Terrors have seized them on a Sudden, and again been remov'd in an Instant, Peace and Joy succeeding in their Room? How could this be ascribed to Melancholy, which comes not to a Height in an *Instant*, and abates not but *gradually*, according as its Causes are removed?

Again, The Sorrow, Amazement, and Agony our blessed Saviour endured, though without *Desperation*; are they not a most certain Evidence, that there may be an inward Impression of Wrath on the Soul, which cannot be ascribed to Melancholy. Hence,

VII. *Such*

(a) Job vi, 4. (b) Psal. lxxxviii, 15. (c) Psal. xxxviii, 4.

(a)

VII. *Such reasonable and well-grounded Fears cast the Soul into a deep Plunge of Thoughtfulness.*

O my Soul, says the Man, where art thou, if thy Sins are not pardoned, nor the Wrath of Almighty God, due for Sin, pacified? Art thou not sinking into the Bottom of all Calamity, yea into the Abyss of endless Misery, even *that Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone for ever* (a). How canst thou avoid the same? For look up, thou seest Heaven gathering nothing but Blackness, Darkness, and horrible Tempests over thy Head. Look down, thou seest nothing but Fire and Brimstone, and a bottomless Pit to lodge in for ever. Look backward, there is Sinfulness from the Womb, and a Train of Evils from thy Youth up. Look forward, there is a Death to die, and an awful Tribunal to appear at. Look inward, there is a Conscience sitting on the Throne maintaining God's Sovereignty, Power and Terribleness in the Soul. Look outwards to this lower visible Creation, all of it, with thy self, is groaning under the overwhelming Weight and Misery of Sin.

O my Soul, thy Misery is extreme; the Relief thereof can admit of no Delay. Thou canst not live in such a Case as this. Thou canst not live under the Guilt, Reign, and Power of Sin: How canst thou live without an Interest in God, the Fountain of Life; and without an Interest in Christ, the Prince of Life? Thou hast nothing in such Circumstances that thou canst live upon, and nothing to answer thy Wants. Thou wantest to have a guilty Soul pardoned, a dead Spirit quickened, a polluted Heart cleansed, a distressed Conscience quieted, a fainting Spirit strengthened, and a perishing Soul saved. How then canst thou rest, where there is nothing of this? Who can be at Ease, who finds himself not only bound over to Hell, but also carrying a Hell in his Bosom? Can all the Creatures, with all their Smiles, refresh a Soul when God doth frown upon it? The Sense of an angry God doth sour and blast

(a) Rev. xx. 10.

blast Comforts, and envenom and imbitter Crosses. What can attend the Man, who hath no Favour to look for at the Hand of God ? What, but a melancholly Train of Fears, Terrors, and amazing Agonies ? And what can he have in Prospect, but the frightful Views of an horrible and astonishing Eternity ? O alas, saith the Soul, is there no Hope for me, *but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries (a) ?* Is there nothing for me, but to live continually in Fear, lest, by the Death of the Body, my Soul should slide into Hell, there to abide till the Body follow ? And what else is to be look'd for ! God is the Supreme Ruler and Governor of the World ; all the Rights of Government, and therefore the Rights of Punishing are in his Hand. He is the *Lord God Omnipotent* that reigneth, therefore he hath a Power equal to his Right. *Glory and Majesty* belong unto him, which being trampled upon by Sin, it cannot deserve lets than severe Animadversion. 'Tis one of the most beautiful Perfections of God, that he is the *Holy One of Israel*, and of purer *Eyes than to behold Iniquity (b) : And what can be expected from all this, but terrible Punishment to the Sinner ? Justice* likewise is one of the essential Dignities of the Divine Nature : And if it belongs to it to give every one his Due, and *to render to every one according to his Works (c) ;* What then can the Sinner expect but Woe and Misery for ever ? The *Law* also, that threatens Sin with eternal Death, is *holy, just and good ;* and 'tis also of a large spiritual Extent, and lays under its Curse, not only gross external Commissions, but even the most secret Workings of Lust or Worldliness, or Pride in the Heart. How can the Soul then find any Hope in itself ! *Conscience* dogs a Man at his Heels, and cites him to answer at the Throne of God ; likewise it becomes as a thousand Witnesses, so that there is no shifting or denying of its Charge : 'Tis God's Deputy also in our Bosom, that passeth Sentence against the Soul on God's Side, and for the Vindication of his

Honour

(a) Heb. x. 27. (b) Hab. i. 13. (c) Rom. ii. 6.

Honour and Rights: 'Tis also a severe Executioner of the Divine Justice in buffeting, smiting, racking and tormenting the Soul. And the *All seeing Judge*, whose Eyes are brighter than the *Sun* in the Firmament, sees me through and through. There is not a Thought, nor a Circumstance of a Thought, but lo, he knows it altogether. And he sees there is no less than *Atheism* and *Blasphemy* in every Sin; since no Sin can be named, wherein there is not a doubting, or rather a denying, that God is our supreme Sovereign and chief Good. He sees that even these called Sins of Infirmary have an infinite Malignity in them. If there's little of Divine Meditation, he sees the Unsuitableness and Aversion of the Heart to Divine Things, that's the Cause of it. If the Things of this World ly nearer our Heart than the Concerns of God's Glory, he sees the Idolatry there is in this. If there is little Heart-melting for Sin, he sees the Infidelity and Hatred of God there is in this. If there is much Ingratitude for Mercies, he sees the Pride and Contempt of God there is in this. If we are impatient and unsubmitive to the Will of God, he sees the Rebellion to the Divine Majesty there is in this. My Sin, then says the awakened Soul, is out of Measure sinful, and I see my self to be lost and undone! O, where shall I find Redemption and Life to a poor dead and lost Soul! Who can deliver me from the horrible Gloom of eternal Darkness and Death? Should I range through the Universe, and pass through all the Ranks of created Beings in it, and extract all the Life and Spirit that's in them; Can any of them separately, or all of them conjunctly, give Life to a dead Soul? O! no, no. There is none of them all a *God to kill or make alive*: None of them are proportioned to the Wants, or commensurate to the Duration of my precious and immortal Soul: Nor can they come with a Price in their Hand to deliver me from going down to the Pit, whence there is no Redemption. What! And must I then think of nothing but Destruction for evermore? Have I no other Prospect but to dwell for ever with devouring Fire, and everlasting Burning;

Is

Is there no Way of bettering my Condition ? Is my State altogether helpless and hopeless ? Ah Lord, my Heart shrinks at the Thought, and my Blood chills at the very mentioning of this. Hence,

VIII. *The awakened Sinner casts about in his Thoughts, how, if possible, he may escape.*

Shall Man be made in vain, saith the awakened and inquisitive Soul ? Or be in a worse State eternally, than if he had never been ? Is he made only to wander up and down, and while out a few Years in eating and drinking, in Chace of Shadows, and in Quest of Vanities and Delusions ; and then after a few Turns in the World, go down to the Pit, whence there is no Redemption for ever ? Shall a whole Tribe of the Creation be utterly lost ? Shall only Man, Man at whose Make there was such Consultation and such Contrivance, and who was made the Lord-deputy of this lower World ; Shall only he, of all the different Ranks of Creatures, be left hopeless and helpless ? we hear of a happy Place above, where there is no Death, no Pain, no Weariness, no melancholly Musings, no absent Good, no present Evil, no sad Tidings in the Day, no dismal Visions in the Night, no Scenes of Misery and Horror, no wicked World to beguile us, no Satan to bubble or surprize us, no Sin to stain us, no Shame to confound us : And shall a whole Race of intelligent immortal Creatures be eternally banished from this, and go down to Hell, and remain among the dismal Shades below ? Where all is Night without any Day, and all is Sorrow without any Comfort ; where Dispair fills their Minds, and Horror fills their Sight ; where there is the dread Realm of Darknes, and where Sorrow, Horror, Anguish, Dispair, and all that breeds Pain, dwell for ever ; where Fiends hiss, Ghosts howl, and Devils yell for ever and ever. O the dread Horrors of the infernal State ! O the dreary Scenes of Hell's dark Regions ! 'Tis a dismal dolorous Realm ! 'Tis shuddering to think of it ! And is there no Way possible for our Relief. Hence,

IX. *The*

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IX. *The Soul deeply anxious in such a great and weighty Concern, and turning its Thoughts several Ways to obtain Satisfaction, perhaps will, in Humility and profound Adoration, plead and represent at the Throne of God, " O blessed Lord, is it*
" *not possible, that a Wisdom that is infinite can*
" *find out a Way of relieving Mankind from the*
" *Power, Guilt, and ruining Effects of Sin, without*
" *any Stain upon any of thine Attributes at all, or*
" *any Loss to their Glory.*

O holy One of *Israel*, I know there are of thine Attributes, which might be glorified without saving a Man. Thy *Justice* can be glorified, in a steady, calm and unalterable Purpose, that all the Sins of Men shall be answered with a Measure of Punishment proportionable to their Demerit. Thy *Equity* can be glorified, in connecting Evil with Evil, penal Evil with moral Evil, by an indissoluble Chain. Thy *Holiness* can be glorified, in testifying to all the World, how ill it comports with thy Nature to dwell with any Thing that is impure, by banishing Sinners eternally from thy Presence. Thy *Wisdom*, in shewing, that tho' thou hast no Delight in the Misery and Ruin of thy Creatures, which rather thou enclines to behold with Compassion; yet if the Ends of thy Government be a greater Good than our Ease, that must rather be chosen than this. And it must also appear, that thy Divine *Authority* must not go for nothing.

And these Attributes thou canst not deny. Thou cannot cease to be a holy and a just God, and a righteous Governor of the World. Thou cannot but be a God of Knowledge, and by thee Actions must be weighed. Thou cannot but detest what is infinitely contrary to thy Nature. And thou cannot but see and observe the unmixable Differences between Equity and Iniquity in thy Dealings, and proceed accordingly.

And I desire to acknowledge and adore thee in all these Perfections of thy essential Wisdom, thy essential

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Justice

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IX. *The*

IX. *The Soul deeply anxious in such a great and weighty Concern, and turning its Thoughts several Ways to obtain Satisfaction, perhaps will, in Humility and profound Adoration, plead and represent at the Throne of God, "O blessed Lord, is it not possible, that a Wisdom that is infinite can find out a Way of relieving Mankind from the Power, Guilt, and ruining Effects of Sin, without any Shur upon any of thine Attributes at all, or any Loss to their Glory.*

O holy One of Israel, I know there are of thine Attributes, which might be glorified without saving a Man. Thy *Justice* can be glorified, in a steady, calm and unalterable Purpose, that all the Sins of Men shall be answered with a Measure of Punishment proportionable to their Demerit. Thy *Equity* can be glorified, in connecting Evil with Evil, penal Evil with moral Evil, by an indissoluble Chain. Thy *Holiness* can be glorified, in testifying to all the World, how ill it comports with thy Nature to dwell with any Thing that is impure, by banishing Sinners eternally from thy Presence. Thy *Wisdom*, in shewing, that tho' thou hast no Delight in the Misery and Ruin of thy Creatures, which rather thou enclines to behold with Compassion; yet if the Ends of thy Government be a greater Good than our Ease, that must rather be chosen than this. And it must also appear, that thy Divine *Authority* must not go for nothing.

And these Attributes thou canst not deny. Thou cannot cease to be a holy and a just God, and a righteous Governor of the World. Thou cannot but be a God of Knowledge, and by thee Actions must be weighed. Thou cannot but detest what is infinitely contrary to thy Nature. And thou cannot but see and observe the unmixable Differences between Equity and Iniquity in thy Dealings, and proceed accordingly.

And I desire to acknowledge and adore thee in all these Perfections of thy essential Wisdom, thy essential

Justice and Holiness, and thy essential Authority and Rights. These are thine Attributes, O Lord, wherein thou art gloriously exalted. They are essential to thee; and O let them all be glorified! We desire not to pluck any of these Jewels from thy Crown of Glory. Thou art great, good, amiable and adorable in every one of thy Excellencies; and let them be eternally ascribed to thee! Nor could thou be the Object of the Love, Desire, Delight and Joy of any loyal Creature, if destitute of any one of them. And therefore, O let the Majesty, Greatness, Justice, and Holiness of God, be magnified for ever!

But blessed Lord, are these Perfections in thee in the same Manner, as the Semblances of them are in Men? Can our narrow Apprehensions, that are confin'd to so narrow a Sphere, take in all the Rights of God's Government, all the Rules of his Holiness, or all the Measures of his Justice?

And these Perfections not being the same Things in thee as in Man, and thy Thoughts not being as our Thoughts, nor thy Ways as our Ways, but thou hast other Rules to walk by than we know of, and another Model of Righteousness: For all our Measures of Justice hath a Relation to a Superior; and hence, though in all distributive Justice among Men, Punishment ought to fall only on the Head of the Offender, yet may it not be otherwise with God? Is it not possible, that there may be a *Commutation* or a *Substitution* of something in the Place of a Sinner? And something in Value so precious as might be sufficient to salve and vindicate the Rights of Divine Government, tho' guilty Men, at least some of them, be spared. May not this be in his Government, who is infinitely wise, and infinitely sovereign, as well as infinitely just and holy?

But then, tho' it should be conceived in the general, That a *Substitution* of something else in the Room of the lost Sinner, in order to his Salvation, is possible from the Wisdom of God, as well as necessary from his Justice; yet what can be thought upon as sufficient for the same? And here all created Invention would

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soon be nonplust. For can it be effected by the Sacrifice of Thousands of Lambs? But how is it possible that the Blood of Bulls and Goats can take away Sin? Can Rivers of Oil, or a large Quantity of Soap or Hyssop be thought sufficient? But what can these do, as pertaining to the Conscience, and the cleansing of the same. Can the best of God's Saints be admitted as a Sacrifice for our Sins? But how can they carry away other Men's Sins, when they cannot bear up under their own; who tell *their Iniquities are a heavy Burden too heavy for them to bear.* Will a Sacrifice of our First-born be admitted? But where shall be found the Lamb that is without Blemish? But may not Angels, the whole Species of them at least, step in, and offer something of such Merit as to purchase Redemption for us? But all possible Obedience being the eternal Debt that all rational Creatures owe to their Creator, if they can only pay their own Debt, how is it possible they could supererogate or spare any Thing to satisfy or merit for us?

And now, dare it at last enter into our Thought, that one of the ELOHIM, one of the sacred Three might interpose and do something imputable to us, which might be sufficient for our Redemption? This is truly what we could not conceive, and durst not expect. But after all, dare we deny that 'tis possible? Would it not be a Thing worthy of his infinite *Wisdom*, to step in when all other Refuge fails, and where all created Wits are at their Wit's End? And can a *Mercy* that is boundless be bound up by any Forfeiture of ours? Or can any Thing be too hard for the *Power* of God? Should One of the sacred Three interpose in this? Which of the Divine Attributes could this contradict? Not his *Holiness*, when he testifies his Abhorrence of Sin, by abolishing it, as well as punishing the same. Not his *Justice*, if all its sacred Rights are vindicate in a Way that makes it shine in its Oriency and Brightness, without the Clouds of Darkness and Terror. Not its *Sovereignty*, if 'tis extended as absolutely and infinitely as it is in him, so as by it to *make Vessels of Honour as*

well as Dishonour (a), and to shew itself in Acts of Grace. Not his rightful *Authority*, if by a gracious Condescension he recover his Right over a whole Tribe that were turned to be a rebellious Crew, and had renounced *totally* their Allegiance to him. Not his *Majesty*, if it be revered and worshipped, instead of being only dreaded. Not his *Power*, when as much of the Energy thereof is exerted in quickning dead Souls, as in stretching out the Heavens, and laying the Foundations of the Earth.

X. *The Soul being pressed by the great Evils it feels or fears, and being in deep Thoughtfulness about its eternal Estate, draws yet nearer, and in deep Humility presents such a Pleading at the Footstool of God's Throne: "Blessed Lord, a Way of vindicating thy Justice, Holiness and Authority, without suffering a whole Tribe of rational Beings to perish for ever, is not only possible, but 'tis actually found out in thy infinite Wisdom; and would it not then be good for thee to save us?"*

Behold I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord! O Great and Good! If it is not only possible for One of the ELOHIM, or sacred Three, to step in and offer something for our Relief, but also if One of them hath actually done so, will not his Deed be sufficient? Sin is a great and enormous Evil; but this Evil can never be more than infinite. If therefore a Person of infinite Dignity hath interposed to lay down his Life, and bear the Punishment due to Sin, is not this an infinite Punishment? And is it not sufficient at once to testify how infinitely Sin is evil, and also to atone for the same! The Evil of Sin lies in its Contrariety to the Nature and Perfections of God: And what Evil there is in this, could never be fully apprehended by any Punishments inflicted on a mere Creature, let them be ever so long, let them be even eternal. But if a Divine Person hath sustain'd the Punishment that Sin deserves:

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(a) Rom. ix. 21.

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As this becomes infinite Punishment, proportionable to the infinite Evil of Sin, so it gives another View of the Holiness and Justice of God to Angels and Men, than ever otherwise they could have attained. And O great Jehovah! Is not this sufficient to satisfy the Demands of these Attributes of thine, and to vindicate the Glory of them for ever?

And if it is the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, that hath achieved so great a Work as the Salvation of Mankind; Is not his Deed assuredly acceptable to thee? O great Jehovah! Certainly thou art well pleased with the Work of thine own Son; thy only Son, the Son of thy Love; thy consubstantial and co-essential Son; who hath *always been rejoicing before thee; and had his Delights with the Sons of Men* (a), and came down from Heaven to testify that *God is Love* (b), *original Love*; and that he himself is *incarnate Love*; and that thy Heart is as his Heart full of Tenderness and Love. Was it not the Father that sent his Son unto the World upon the very Errand of reconciling together an intense vehement Love to perishing Mankind, with an inflexible Regard to the absolute Purity, Justice and Perfection of the Divine Nature? *Yea therefore doth the Father love him, because he laid down his Life for his sheep* (c).

O! let not the Lord be angry with me if I yet speak. If this Son of God becomes incarnate by joining himself personally with our Nature, may not his Deed become imputable to us? *The Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us* (d). And being God and Man, cannot he act for both, be entrusted by both, and consult the Honour and Interest of both? If Christ is Man, 'tis Man that hath fulfilled the Law in him. And if he is God also, then there is an overflowing Merit in his Obedience, imputable and communicable to Man. Had a Service or Suffering been required of the holiest Angels, or the most bright and shining Seraphim, that might be imputable to sinful Men, they would have soon a-

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swered

(a) Prov. viii. 30. (b) 1 John iv. 16. (c) John x. 17. (d) John i. 14.

Answered with the *wise Virgins*, Matth. xxv. We have no Grace to spare, we cannot supererogate for the Profit of others. But Christ, the Son of God, having taken on him our Nature, and substitute himself in our Room, and therein satisfied what Justice could exact of us, and having freely and voluntarily done so: He having undertaken it who is Master, not only of his own Creatures, and Master of his own Graces, but Master also of his own Life; and who also had Power ample enough to break through the Sufferings he undertook, and to resume his Life and former Condition, yea acquire a new Glory by it as Mediator, which he had not before: May not a poor broken-hearted Sinner rest on this as imputable to us, and pleadable for our Faith, Hope and Comfort, unto eternal Life? Christ Jesus, the Son of God, by the most just, wise, and merciful Designation of the Father, and by his own most obedient and voluntary Subjection, being one with his People in a manifold, secret, mysterious Union; and having a full Power to lay down his Life, and to take it up again; and having actually laid it down a Sacrifice for our Sins, and a Ransom for our Souls; May we not plead now for the Imputation of this? Plead in particular, that God, without any Wrong to himself, Wrong to his Justice, or Wrong to the Dignity of his Government, may now cast a compassionate and favourable Eye upon Mankind, repair the Ruins Sin hath made, and send his mighty Spirit into our Hearts, to renew, sanctify and rule them, and so give us a Fitness, as well as a Right to the Enjoyment of his Favour, and the eternal Life that lies in the same? -

And if One of the sacred Three hath undertaken our Redemption, and to bring about the Pardon of Sin; if he is the Son of God, and also the Son of Man, and thereby his Undertaking is both acceptable to God and imputable to Man, then I'll creep near the Foot-stool of thy Throne, and humbly say to the Majesty of Heaven, Would it not be good in thee to pardon and save us?

Blessed Lord, would it be good for thee to despise *the Work of thy Hands*? Thy People use to reason and

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plead upon this Argument, *That God hath made them;* and strengthen their Faith and Fervency in Prayer by this very Argument, *For sake not the Work of thine own Hands,* Psal. cxxxviii. 8. especially such a special curious and noble Piece of Work as the human Kind. The People of God use to plead with him upon this very Argument in their deepest Distress, *Isa. lxiv. 8. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the Clay, and thou art the Potter, and we are all the Work of thine Hand, be not wroth very sore, O Lord.* Wilt thou be angry with thy Work? Lord, be angry at the Works of Sin, and destroy the Works of Satan; but do not destroy the Works of thine own Hand, even the Spirits which thou hast formed in Man, in the midst of him. Is not this Plea, *Isa. xlv. 11.* represented, as having a Kind of Command upon God? *Thus saith the Holy One of Israel, thy Maker, Ask of me Things concerning my Sons, and concerning the Work of my Hands, command me.* While we come to God under the Notion only that we are the Work of his Hands; and, for this very End, that he may preserve his own Work, we may have any Thing from him. If we indeed come to him, and propose, that he may spare and preserve the Works of Sin, or the Works of the Devil in us, we can have nothing of this granted: For, *if we regard Sin in our Hearts, he will not hear us* (a). But if we are for preserving in us only what is God's Work in us, this he cannot deny; his Inscription is upon it; and name but it, and nothing else, our Petitions are as a Law to him. O wonderful! How strange is the Plea! There is but one Argument stronger, if stronger can be than this, There is, I say, but one Argument stronger next to the Glory of the Divine Attributes among all the Topicks of Faith, and that never fails us;

And 'tis this, that Christ hath redeemed us. And, Lord, would it be good for thee to let thine own Son lose all the Travel, Pains and Cost he was at, about our Redemption, as would be the Issue if poor Sinners, and willing to return, were not saved? The Son of

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God

(a) Psal. lxxvi. 18.

God did take a great Journey to save us. He came down from Heaven to Earth to seek and save lost straying Souls. He earnestly contested with a perishing World. He died a bloody, painful, shameful, and accursed Death, to pay the Debt of his People. He arose again from the Dead, bringing up his Blood with him into the Holiest of Holies, and there exerciseth the Office of everlasting Priesthood. And shall all this Travel and Pains of the Mediator's Soul be in vain? Shall his Blood be as Water spilt on the Ground? Shall Christ, the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God, be thought to have shed his Blood in vain? Shall there be a Frustration of the whole Work of Man's Redemption, so heroically atchieved and executed with such irresistible Strength? Let this be far from thee, O Lord, *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right (a)?*

Would it be good that Christ the Son of God should lose all the Glory of his Mediatorial Office? Why did Christ take our Law-Place and Room? Why was the Sun of Righteousness eclipsed? Why did Justice reach him in our Stead? Why, but that for all his Labours he might have a redeemed People, as a Seed to serve him? And that he might have a peculiar Crown to himself, as Lord, Mediator and Redeemer; whereby all Men are obliged to *honour the Son, as they honour the Father (b)*. But how could this Design be attained, if Sin were not pardoned, and the Sinner freely justified by his Blood?

XI. *The thoughtful Soul proceeding in his earnest Enquiries into the Grounds of Faith and Hope, sees the Glory of God eminently concerned in the Redemption of lost Mankind: and hence begs Leave, in all Humility, to represent and plead at the Foot stool of God's Throne: "O blessed Lord, is not the Business of Man's Redemption so well laid in our Immanuel, as that now all the Divine Perfections shine in their greatest Brightness, in the Device and Accomplishment of this great Salvation."*

And here the serious and inquisitive Soul may, with awful and solemn Adoration, lay several Things before the Lord. Blessed

(a) Gen. xviii. 25. (b) John v. 23.

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Blessed Lord, Is not the Glory of thy manifold *Wisdom* more discovered in our Redemption than ever otherwise it could be seen? Where were there ever heard tell of greater Riches, and Depths of the Wisdom of God, than in finding out a Way to Heaven between the Wrath of God and the Sin of Man? Here a Wisdom is to be seen that knows how to bring the greatest Good out of the greatest Evil, and how to make Death, the Wages of Sin, to be the Destruction of Sin. A Wisdom, that hath made it visibly to be seen, what great Things infinite Power can effect; how low infinite Love can stoop; how high infinite Grace can exalt; how deep infinite Counsel can contrive; how Mercy can be manifested to the full, and Justice and Judgment yet shine in their Mid day Brightness. O how amiably and gloriously, through Christ, doth the *manifest Wisdom of God appear in the Church to all Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places (a)*. O the Depths of the Riches of Wisdom, and the Knowledge of God!

Doth not the Glory of thy *Holiness*, shine more brightly in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and his Sufferings for the Sins of Men, than ever it could have done otherwise, and that to the eternal Admiration and Transport of Angels as well as Men? How could they have learned in any other Instance but this, that God's Holiness is so infinitely pure and immaculate, as that Sin is as much hated by him, as his own Son is loved? Holiness is the very Brightness of God's Face: It attracts the Eyes, the Hearts, and Ravishments of Men and Angels. And here in the Dispensation of the Gospel, through this Constitution of Grace in Immanuel, 'tis evidently seen, *That he is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; that he is *the Holy One of Israel*; that *there is none holy as the Lord*; that Sin is the Evil he hates, and cannot but punish, were it even only imputed, and not inherent, and tho' the Imputation thereof should be on his own Son. What Wonder is it now, if the Cherubims, seeing this Glory shall cry, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts*: Or if *the Heavens shall own they are*

(a) Eph. iii. 10.

are not pure in God's Sight ; or the holy Angels there shall cover their Faces before him, as ashamed of their Purity and Holiness, when compared with God's !

Even thy Justice, O Lord, is more fully and gloriously displayed in all the essential and inviolable Rights thereof, by the Substitution and Satisfaction of an incarnate God in the Room and Stead of lapsed Man, than ever otherwise it could have been seen. As thou, O Lord, sits on the Throne of thy Holiness, so Justice and Judgment are the Dwelling-place of thy Throne (a) : And if Justice in God be like his other Attributes, if its infinite, as they are, it can never be seen in its due Glory and Rights, as by an infinite Punishment. And where is the Creature that merely is so, that can sustain an infinite Punishment ? So that of all that ever suffered for Sin, 'tis only JESUS CHRIST that could say, *Father, I have glorified thy Name* (b). A serene Veneration of the Justice of God is eternally pleasing, composing, and delighting to all the loyal Spirits above : And is not the inflexible Justice of God, the sacred Regard he hath to himself, and the Honour of his Government, and his serene Dislike of Sin, more gloriously displayed in the Incarnation and Sufferings of his own Son, than in Thousands and Ten thousands being hurled into Hell ?

O great Jehovah, 'tis fit that thy Sovereignty and unlimited Dominion over all should be eternally owned, worshipped and adored. There is nothing more awfully revered in Heaven, as it ought to be, than the Sovereignty and absolute Dominion of God : And was it ever more manifested than in the Gospel-Scheme ? Divine Sovereignty must correspond to his infinite Right : According to this, as there are in a great Man's House, not only Vessels of Silver and Gold, but also of Wood and Earth, thou canst and dost of the same Lump make Vessels either to Honour or Dishonour. And a Sovereignty that is absolute and infinite, must extend to Acts of Grace, as well as of Power ; And where are there such stately Steps of the Divine Sovereignty, as in the Work of our Redemption by the Son of God, who suffered, that

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(a) Psal. xlvii. 8. and lxxxix. 14. (b) John xvii. 4.

we might reign, who justifies us freely by his Blood, and bestows many Blessings on Mankind, when he was Debitor to none.

And, O blessed Jehovah, thy Love to Mankind had lien eternally under Suspension and Restraint, if thine own Son had not laid down his Life to take off the Restraint. 'Tis in this, that God commended his Love, above all Things, that while we were Sinners, Christ died for us (a). And of no other Instance of Divine Goodness can it be said, but this, That this is as far as even the Love, the very infinite Love of God himself can go, when God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him for us all (b). For, O great and gracious God, what could thou give more than thine own Son? And O consubstantial Son of God, what couldst thou give more than thy self, thy noble and superexcellent Self? Here is to be seen Goodness to the uttermost, Love in its Perfection! In this verily was the Love of God perfected (c). Nor are there any higher Notes of Praise among all the Inhabitants of Heaven, or any Thing that can cause greater Trances, Extacies and Raptures among them, than their eternal Songs of the Love of God manifested in Immanuel. Is it not this, that causes many a pleasant and rapturous Story of the electing Love of God, in having a Consultation of Love, and a Plot of Grace about lapsed Mankind, even from everlasting? And many a pleasant Song of redeeming them out of every Tongue, Kindred and Nation, from the Grave, Hell, and all the Powers of Darkeness? And the Glory, the Wonder, the Joy of all this Grace, Goodness, and Love, will not be confined only to one Race of happy Spirits, such, I mean, as have dwelt in Flesh, but it runs through all Heaven, and affects all the Angels and Cherubims of Glory.

Even Majesty itself hath a Relation to Vouchsafements of gracious Condescension. There may be Terror at Greatness, but its kindly Respect, and humble Veneration, that hath to do with Majesty. And 'tis in Christ that the Holy One of Israel is represented as High and Lofty

(a) Rom. v. 8. (b) Rom. viii. 32. (c) : John ii. 5.

Lofty in his condescending to dwell in the humble and contrite Heart (a).

And again, 'tis in the Work of our Redemption, through the Son of God, that the Mercy of God is eminently displayed: Which, tho' a Divine Attribute, had never seen the Light, nor been worshipped and adored for ever, unless Christ had manifested it. But that *the Day spring from on high hath visited us, this is through the tender Mercy of our God (b)*; and so 'tis now the proclaimed Name and Glory of God, *The Lord God merciful and gracious (c)*.

In all Humility I would represent to thee, O Lord, that the Way of relieving Mankind from the ruining Effects of Sin by a God incarnate, as it sets off the Glory of all the Divine Attributes more than ever otherwise they could be seen; so, in a special Manner, it manifests the Glory of a God that is One in Three, and Three in One. It not only shews the Glory they have all in common, in the Manifestation of the essential Perfections of the Deity, but the Glory that is due to them in their several personal Subsistences, and their several personal Works in our Redemption. And this is that Glory of the sacred Three, which we know not how it could so well be display'd, as in the mysterious Oeconomy of the Gospel. Particularly, there is shew'd in it, That it was the Father that did hold the great Council of Heaven with the Son and the Holy Ghost about Man's Redemption: That *he so loved the World, as to send his only begotten Son into it (d)*: That *he therefore loved his Son, because he laid down his Life for his Sheep*: That *he laid Help on One that was mighty to bear it (e)*: That *it pleased the Father to bruise him*; that *thereby he found a Ransom*: That *he prepared a Body for him to suffer in (f)*; and that *it pleased the Father that in him all Fulness should dwell (g)*: That *he draws us to the Son by the Cords of his Love, and by the Pull of his omnipotent Arm*. Again, hereby is shewed, how the Son *loved us, and washed us in his Blood*: How he is the

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(a) Isa. lvii. 15. (b) Luke i. 78. (c) Exod. xxxiv. 6. (d) John iii. 16. (e) Psal. lxxxix. 19, (f) Heb. x. 5. (g) Col i. 19.

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Light and Life of the World, and the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sin thereof: How he hath purchased eternal Redemption for us, which we had forfeited and lost: How he offers his Grace to the Chief of Sinners: How his Grace superabounds, as Sin abounds: How fit he was for the Business; for who so fit to mend the World, as he that made it? Who could be sent by the Father, and send the Spirit, but the Person that's Middle between them? Who could repair the defaced Image of God in us, but the *express Image of his Father's Person*? Who could restore us to the Inheritance of Children, but the First-born of God, and *Heir of all Things*? And hereby is demonstrate the Glory of the Third Person, as he bestowed Gifts, beyond Measure, on the human Nature of Christ (a); as he upheld *him by the Right-hand of his Righteousness* (b); as he rears up our Souls to be Temples for God to dwell in (c), by enlightning, inclining, purifying, and ruling them; and, as he sanctifies and *seals both Soul and Body unto the Day of Redemption* (d).

XII. *The serious Soul thinking now he hath Encouragement to make Application of these Pleas of Faith to himself, he draws near unto the Throne of Grace; and, in all Humility, pleads, "O great and merciful Lord, if it is for thy Glory to save lost Man-kind, may not I be saved among others?"*

O let not the Lord be angry, if, with others, I pray and say unto God, *Do not condemn me* (e): *Do not forsake the Work of thine own Hands* (f). There is Joy in Heaven at the Conversion of one Sinner; and this not only from their Love to a precious Soul, but also from their Regard to thy Glory. And can the Glory of Mercy and Freeness of Grace shine more brightly in the Salvation of any one Soul, than such a Soul as mine? If the Greatness of Mercy is to be estimated by the Greatness of Sin, and the Greatness of Misery, which

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(a) Matth. iii. 16. John iii. 34. (b) Isa. xli. 10. (c) Eph. ii. 22. (d) Eph. iv. 30. (e) Job x. 2. (f) Psal. cxxxviii. 8.

it rescues from, in what Instance can Mercy be displayed more gloriously than in such a Soul as mine is? What blessed Spirit above, or what Inhabitant in Heaven can have more Reason to admire free Grace, than I, if reached with the same? Especially, if that is true, as it certainly is, which is said, *Luke vii. 47. Where much is forgiven, they will love the more*, praise the more, and admire the more. O blessed Lord, what an Act of Mercy would it be to pity and save the like of me! The less Worth in me, the more God-like Mercy will appear in helping me. O let me hear anew thy Name and thy Glory proclaimed, that *thou art the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving Iniquity.*

O Holy One of *Israel*! may the exercised Soul say, How great, or how aggravated my Sins are in thy Sight, which I mournfully lament and resent with deep Self-abasement and Contrition; yet they cannot be greater than the Sins for which Christ hath died: Since he died for the Sins of the whole World, that is, for every Size and Enormity of Sin that hath been committed, by whatever Sorts, Capacities and Sexes of Mankind. Could an infinite Wisdom, that saw from the Tower of Eternity all the Evil that could be in the Heart and Conversation of Mankind, contrive a Remedy, and yet not provide that the Remedy should be sufficient for the Malady? The Design of the Incarnation, and Satisfaction of the Son of God, was *not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance* (a): And is there any Sin more than sinful? Thou came, blessed Jesus, not to *heal the Whole, but the Sick*: And is there any Malady above the Skill of such a wise and great Physician? So that whatever be my Sins, says the Soul; if I have a Heart to part with them, it cannot be above the Reach of Christ to save me from them.

Again, Whatever be my Sins, they cannot deserve more than an infinite Punishment; and this Christ the Son of God, and Surety for us, hath suffered, and thereby hath presented a perfect Satisfaction to the Justice of God for Sin, and a perfect Righteousness to the Judge

(a) *Matth. ix. 13.*

of all the Earth, for this very Purpose of being imputed to Man, and estimated on his Account. And here I desire to be taken off the natural Bottom, Posture, and Situation of my Soul, which was to work out a Happiness to myself by something of my own. O I see the Vanity and Folly of this, and disclaim it. I desire to be found only in *Christ*, and to renounce all mine own Righteousness, and seek Shelter and Safety only in the *Righteousness of God by Faith*; a Righteousness every Way sufficient to deliver me from my Judge, if, by Humility and Faith, I am invested with it, whatever my Sins have been, which now I am willing to renounce.

Whatever my Sins have been, they cannot exceed the Mercy of God, which graciously forgives Iniquity, Transgression and Sin. If the Evil of Sin is infinite, the Mercy of God is no less so. And whatever the Law can reveal to be a Sin, the Mercy of God reveals a Pardon for the same. The *Mercy-seat* covered the whole *Ark*, Exod. xxv. and was exactly to an Hair-breadth of the same Dimensions; and the Law was put in the *Ark*; why, but to intimate there is Mercy for the pardoning of every Sin against any Part of the Law whatsoever. Hence may a contrite Soul say, Whatever my Sins be, there is Mercy upon repenting of them, and flying to *Christ*. O blessed Lord, if any perish finally, it is not the Malignity of the Sin, but the Malignity of the Sinner that is the Cause of it: 'Tis not because he hath been guilty, but because he resolves to be guilty by Continuance in Sin, that a Soul is ruined: 'Tis because they will not come to *Christ*, and live. For the very Sin against the Holy Ghost is not unpardonable, because there wants Mercy large enough to pardon it; but because it refuses the Mercy that can only pardon it. If I return to the Almighty with all my Heart, and put Iniquity far from my Heart and Tabernacle, then I shall make my Supplication unto him, and he shall hear my Voice (a), and deliver me from the Pit, for he hath found a Ransom (b).

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Further,

(a) Job xxii. 23, 27. (b) Job xxxiii. 24.

Further, Whatever my Sins are, they cannot exceed the Virtue of Christ's Blood. That which is sufficient to propitiate for the Sins of the whole World, is sufficient to wash away more Sins than any one Person can be capable of. The Blood of Christ, being the Blood of God, cannot be as Water spilt on the Ground, nor be of so little Value and Efficacy, as not to blot out the greatest Sin, and cleanse the greatest Sinner. No Sin can exceed the Vertue of the Blood of God, that is of infinite Value, unless it be the Sin of rejecting and trampling upon it, by Impenitency and Unbelief. And no Sinfulness of Man can be greater than the Righteousness of a God. 'Tis a Blood that hath already washed away Scarlet Sins, crying Sins, notorious Sins, Conscience-wasting Sins. And this Fountain of Christ's Blood, as it did run under Ground from Eternity in the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son, so it did burst forth near the very Birth of Time, at the first opening up of the Covenant of Grace, and is still kept open. 'Tis not a sealed Fountain, but 'tis a *Fountain opened for the House of David for Sin and Uncleanneſs* (a). And therefore what hinders me to go there and wash, and be made clean? And washed we will be from all our Abominations, *if we will but be made clean.*

Are not the Offers thereof made to *Sinners* indefinitely? And who is more sinful than I am, will the contrite Soul say? Lord, save me from my Sins. 'Tis made to them that are lost and undone; and who see themselves more lost and undone than I am. Lord, come, seek and save thy poor lost Sheep (b). 'Tis made to the Poor and Needy; And who is more needful than I am? *I am poor and needy, Lord, make haste and help me* (c). 'Tis an Act of Grace to the Undeserving; and who is more undeserving than I am, and who needs Grace more than I do?

O great and highly exalted God! *Heaven is thy Throne, and the Earth is thy Foot-stool*; and I would think it irreverend damnable Presumption to plead for any Thing

(a) Zech. xiii. 1. (b) Psal. cxix. 176. (c) Psal. lxx. 5.

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Thing at thy Hand, but what thou can find Cause in thy self to give: But here thou can find Cause in thy self, and the Glory of all thy Attributes to help such a poor miserable Caitiff as I am; for Lord, here is a Soul in a sad Plunge, even in an extreme and desperate Necessity, and would it not be to the Glory of thy *Wisdom* to come in for Relief to my Soul in such a Case as this, and to help at a dead Lift? Dost thou not use to make Man's Extremity thy Opportunity for Help and Succour? And it has been the old Way of thine ancient Servants, *when they knew not what to do, to have their Eyes upon thee (a)*: And when they could see nothing without or within themselves but what caused Terror in the Land of the Living, yet they have *looked* to thee and were *lightened (b)*. And may not I do so likewise? Here is a Soul that sits in Darkness and in the Shadows of Death for Want of the Application and Intimation of Pardon of Sin, and Peace with God: And would it not be to the Glory of the Riches of thy *Grace*, as well as the Ease of a troubled Spirit, so to present the Perfection of thy Sacrifice to the Soul, and the Freedom of the Imputation thereof, as to draw it, so compassed with the Terrors of Justice, to a hearty Acceptation of the Scheme of Salvation, and a voluntary Subjection to thy Government of Grace? Here is a Soul sadly complaining of felt Hardness of Heart, which it thinks hard as the nether Mill-stone, being little melted with either a Sense of Sin, or a Conviction of Righteousness: And would it not be to the Glory of thy *Power* to break this Rock in Pieces, and make it soft, tender and susceptible of Divine Impressions? Here is a polluted Soul, sensible that 'tis made loathsome with Sin; would it not be to the Glory of thy *Holiness*, to cleanse this Soul, and transform it into thine own Likeness? Here is a guilty Soul, that owes thee a Debt of Punishment: And would it not be to the Glory of thy *Justice*, to receive Payment from a good and sponisible Hand, even the Man Christ Jesus? Here is a rebellious Soul; and would it not extend the Glory of thy *Kingdom*,

C 3

(a) 2 Chron. xx. 12. (b) Psal. xxxiv. 5.

dom, to rescue this Soul from the Hand of thine Enemies, and subdue it to thy self?

Thus the exercised Soul pleads for eternal Life. And hereby,

XIII. *A secret Hope is wrought in the Heart.*

I cannot think, *says the exercised Soul*, but there is a gracious Meaning in this to Man, *sinful as he is; And who knows but the Lord may be yet gracious to me.* I said indeed that my Strength and Hope is perished from the Lord, remembering my Affliction and my Misery, the Worm-wood and the Gall; and my Soul hath them still in Remembrance, and is humbled in me: But this I recall to Mind; and therefore have I Hope, because 'tis of the Lord's Mercies that I am not consumed, and because his Compassions fail not (a). And who can tell but the Lord will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce Anger, that I perish not (b)? He hath dealt graciously to many Thousands e're now, who have been, *said the Soul*, in the same Depths as I am, yet their Souls have been kept above Water in Hope.

And tho' this secret Hope be only a small glimmering Light, and in the Entrance very weak, staggering between Hope and Fear, and doubtful of the Issue, yet it so far keeps from *sinking Despondency*, as that the Soul begins to mark the Promises, which before it looked upon as being either needless by Presumption, or worthless by Despair; and made no Account of them but as common Passages, or Things it could not claim. But now the Man, having marked the Promises, begins to muse upon them, and to think with himself, O what if the Lord shew himself yet compassionate and gracious to me! O what a blessed Change would this be! Oh, if God turn from his Anger, I should not perish, but live in his Sight! But yet,

XIV. *The Soul finds itself strangely astonished with the Thought of Eternity.*

O Eternity, Eternity! How shall I do to speak of thee? Thou art as a boundless Space, where tho' one should

(a) Lam. iii. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. (b) Jonah iii. 9

should fly ever so swift, or ever so long, there is no coming nearer any Term, Point, or Period; but all is boundless, undeterminate and unmeasurable. Thou art a State that admits of neither Change or Pause for ever. Every Thing but Eternity has an End at last. As many soever as there are Stars in the Firmament, or Sands on the Sea-shore, or Hairs on the Heads of all the Children of Men, that either are or have been, or will be, yet there is a determinate Number of them: But, for Eternity, it hath neither End or Middle in it; and therefore 'tis perfectly indefinite and indeterminable: So that when the Soul hath lived Ten thousand Times Ten thousand of Millions of Myriads of Ages, it can never approach one Moment nearer the End, or nearer the Middle of Eternity. O Eternity! What can I say more of thee, but that thou art ever, ever, ever! A Duration, a Permanency of Being, a Continuation of Existence that is ever, ever, ever!

What Workings doth this Cause in my Mind, and what casting about of Thoughts, whether this boundless Duration is to be filled with Joys or Sorrows; with a pleasant Sight of the Face of God, or with horrid Visions of Devils or damned Spirits; with the refreshing Beams of the Glory of God in Heaven, or with the purpureal painful Flames of Hell. A thousand Years to Eternity is not one Drop of Water to the whole Ocean, or one small Gravel-stone in Comparison of the whole Sand; or even as a Watch in the Night, when Men are asleep, and have scarce any Perception of Duration at all; for there is still some Proportion between the least Number and the greatest, the least Duration and the greatest, if that greatest Number and greatest Duration have any Bounds at all: But in long Eternity there is not any Bounds or Measure at all. And this great, this vast Eternity is filled either with Rivers of Delight, or with Lakes of Fire and Brimstone. O what can be sufficient to alarm the immortal Spirit of Man, if this be not! and to awaken him to a great Concern about his Salvation! One serious View of Eternity is enough to amaze a poor Soul, tho' looking upon it at a Distance,

were

were it the Distance of Six thousand Years, even all the Years of this passing World; much more to be so near it, as our short and uncertain Lives put us, which set us to the very Door of Eternity : For our Age is as nothing before it, and sets us not off the Brink of endless Eternity, from the first Moment of our Lives till our Breath go out. O awful and amazing Thought !

O *Eternity, Eternity* ! What shall I do to conceive of thee ? Thou art too bulky and boundless for our Apprehension : For let our Apprehension stretch itself to the utmost, it can never reach nearer thy End. O *Eternity* ! thou art nonplussing and confounding to our Judgment : For when it would compare thee to Ought, there is no Measure to make the Comparison with. O *Eternity* ! Thou art astonishing to Invention : For there is not only no Simile to illustrate what thou art ; but also the more we think to conceive of thee, the more dost thou transcend our Thoughts.

Imagination, which can start from one End of Heaven to another, and walk about the Circle of the Earth, cannot advance one Moment nearer the End, or nearer the Middle of Eternity. Let *Invention* call in for its Aid all possible Similies ; let it think there are as many Millions of Millions of Years in Eternity, as ever there were Spires of Grass on the Earth, or Grains of Sand in the Sea, it cannot come nearer any Bounds or Period in Eternity. Let *Apprehension* stretch a Line to measure Eternity, it will soon find that not only the Line is too short, but that it cannot be so much as applied ; there being no Proportion at all between a Duration which hath Bounds, and which therefore may be conceived, and that which hath no Bounds, and therefore is perfectly inconceivable. Let *Judgment* make a Standard, whereby it would mete out an eternal Duration, it would soon find that the longest Measure of Time it can conceive, is as far from the Length of Eternity, as the shortest Instant of Time that can be assign'd. O astonishing !

And this Eternity, this vast and boundless Eternity is stored either with Pains or Pleasures, either with in-

tolerable

tolerable Misery, or inexpressible Happiness. Will a Man then still go on in his sinful Pursuits, and in an over-grown Love and excessive Care about worldly Things, to the Neglect of a Blessedness that lasts thro' Eternity? By what Name shall this be called? Shall it be called *Folly*? It is so, but 'tis Folly without a Comparison; there being no Man but he would labour and be diligent one Hour in his worldly Affairs, for preventing a Misery through his whole Life, and the making the rest of his Time easy and comfortable. But our whole Lives are far from bearing that Proportion to Eternity, that one Hour bears to threescore or fourscore Years. Shall it be called downright *Madness* and Distraction of Mind? It is so indeed, but to such a superlative Height as hath not a Parallel: For it doth not call for so much Pity to see Madmen busied about Trifles and Toys, as to see People having the sober Use of their Reason in all Things, but the main Thing, in all Affairs, but that of their Soul, and in all Interests, but these of Eternity. Shall it then be imputed to downright *Infidelity*, that whatever Men are taught to say of the Immortality of their Souls, and their eternal State, yet they believe not one Word about the same? But then 'tis Unbelief so gross, as that no Christian, and but few Heathens, will own this to be their Case, but will profess and avow, that the Soul is immortal, that there is a future State, and that Death enters them into the same; which yet operates as little on their Minds, and as little influences their Hearts and Lives, as if they were not only persuaded that it is not true there is a future State, but also that 'tis impossible. O how shall such Stupidity be accounted for! Unless it be that Mankind being *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, they are dead to the intellectual invisible World, and as the Dead know nothing, as little do they discern any Thing said of its Glory. O for spiritual Life, to make us capable of apprehending Eternity! O for spiritual Light, to enter us into a serious Thought of Eternity! O for spiritual Sense, to be constantly influenced by the View thereof! O amazing and astonishing Eternity! Thou art hard at Hand. Suppose every

every one of us could live threeſcore Years and ten, or fourſcore Years, yet Eternity is at our very Door. One has lived twenty of theſe Years, and ſo 'tis but fifty or ſixty Years between him and Eternity. Another has lived already thirty Years, and 'tis only forty or fifty Years to his Eternity. Another has reached to forty Years, and let other forty Years paſs, and be ſure, they will aſſoon paſs over as the bygone Years, and then he is ſwallowed up in long Eternity. Another hath lived fifty of theſe Years; and now the beſt Half of Life is over, and the reſt is but the more weak and languiſhing Remains of Life; and 'tis but twenty or thirty Years to come, and then he finds himſelf in Eternity. Another is come to ſixty of theſe Years, and then 'tis but ten or twenty Years, when comes his Eternity that never comes to an End. Another is advanced to the Length of ſeventy Years; and now how long has ſuch an one to live: His Glaſs is near run, his Sun is near ſet, he has his Foot on the Border of Eternity, which is ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever without End for evermore. O that all this were as much minded and conſidered as 'tis known! *Lord teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts to Wiſdom (a).*

O Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! Thou art either an Eternity of Death and Miſery, or an Eternity of Life and Happineſs. And though the Lord ſhould require of me, ſaith the thoughtful Soul, to ſpend a thouſand Years in Faſtings, in Watchings, in Hunger, in Cold, in Dens and Caverns of the Earth; would I have Reaſon to complain of this, as being too much for the avoiding an Eternity of Miſery, and for the attaining an Eternity of Happineſs? O if there be the leaſt Offer or Hope of the ſame, let me have a Part in it! And hence,

XV. *The alarmed Soul riſes to earneſt Importunity, and ſtrong Cries to the Throne of God for eternal Life and Salvation.*

O what is this I have been laſt thinking upon! There is an Eternity, and 'tis an Eternity either of Life or Death,

either

either of Misery or Happiness! In an Eternity of Death they are dying for ever, but cannot die, tho' they wish for the same: They ly gasping for ever in the Throws of Death, in these gloomy Regions, where Darknes and Horror have their Seat, and where no dawning of Light or Hope shall arise for ever, and where never Ease or Pleasure are to be found. In an Eternity again of Life, they are where God and the Lamb appear in all their Glory, and God Immanuel imparts all his Fullness, and where Life, and Love, and Joy, spring up in their Souls for ever. How dreadful is it to think on Hell, where God's Anger burns, and doleful *weeping and wailing, and gnashing of Teeth* is heard in all their Dwellings! And how pleasant to hear of Heaven, where Health, Melody and Joy is in all their Habitations, and where is the proper Region of Light, Life and Solace for ever, and nothing at all is wanting to make their Joy full!

O my Soul, what's thy Thought of this? Canst thou be at rest till thou have Security for a happy everlasting State? O who can be at Ease, if he thinks on an eternal Doom in Hell! O great and merciful God, I cry unto thee for Deliverance from the Wrath to come, and for a Right and Fitness for eternal Blessedness. O this is what I must have! I must have Pardon, I must have Righteousness, I must have Deliverance from Hell, and a Title and Meetness for Heaven. I must have all this, or I perish for ever. I cry unto thee, O Lord, I weep, I groan, I sigh at thy Feet, I'll subscribe a Blank, fill it up as thou pleasest, only let me have my Soul for a Prey: Let me not, I pray thee, be eternally and irrecoverably lost: Let me be saved of the Lord with an everlasting Salvation!

In Heaven they see God, and are made like him. In Heaven they have no Need of the Sun, Moon or Stars, for the Lord is unto them an everlasting Light, and the Days of their Mourning are ended. In Heaven they are come to Mount Zion, unto the City of the living God, and to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, and to the
Spirits

Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament. In Heaven they are ever with the Lord, enter his Joy, and have an eternal Life, without Fear of dying in that happy Place, where *their Walls are Salvation, and their Gates Praise.* But Hell is the opposite Place to all blessed Seats; the dismal Region where nothing that's pure, nothing that's pleasant or joyful can ever light upon them: There is no Saviour there to bleed afresh in their Stead, or to pity their Woes, or plead for their Relief, and no heavenly Spirit to quicken their dead Souls, and raise them from the second Death, and so their State is irrecoverably miserable.

And now, O that I might live ! partake of Grace, and live to God, and live with him for ever, the vital Breath of whose Spirit is the spiritual and eternal Life of Souls. O Father of Spirits, and Father of Mercies ! O Lover and Saviour of Souls ! O Spirit of Light, Life and Joy for ever ! I cry to thee One in Three, and Three in One, for Life, for eternal Life to my immortal Soul. I can be at no Rest without it, nor will I give the Lord any Rest till he *command the Blessing, even Life for evermore.* And O let not the Lord be angry, if extreme Necessity, with some Encouragements from Promises of Grace, put me forward in the Earnestness of my Spirit to plead for Life and Salvation to a dead, lost Soul. Heavenly Father, the Necessity of this is even infinite ; for *who can dwell for ever with devouring Fire, who can abide in everlasting Burning ?* And is it not thy Glory, O Lord, to be the Refuge and Sanctuary of all distressed Creatures who fly unto thee, as not seeing how they can be safe any other Way ? And doth not the Lord *repent himself for his Servants, when he sees their Strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left (a) ?* And now, O Lord, if Sin, if Misery, if Necessity felt and groaned under have ever had any Thing of Argument to move thee to pity and help one, I do not want them.

I am

(a) Deut. xxxii. 36.

I am here under a Necessity, says the Soul, of being as one whom the Lord cannot get rid of till I obtain his Grace and receive Life freely at his Hands. I beg Leave in all Humility, O Lord, to urge this Matter at the Foot-stool of thy Throne, as with deep Prostration and Self-abasement, so also with earnest and incessant Importunity. O let not the Lord be angry, if I mind thee of the *gracious* Words that have proceeded from thy Lips, even the absolute Promises thou hast made of a *free and full Pardon of Sin*, of a *new Heart* and a *new Spirit*, of an *Inscription of the Law of God on the Heart* (a), of *making People willing in the Day of thy Power* (b). I'll mind also the *Throne of Grace* erected on the *Blood of Immanuel*, where no poor contrite returning Sinner ever yet died. I'll also mind some Considerations of eternal Reason flowing from the Nature and Attributes of God; as, how *Mercy* would appear to be infinite Mercy indeed in saving the like of me, and how that the Power of God would be seen to be infinite, as it is, in pardoning such great Transgressions, and subduing such mighty Sins as mine. And let the Power of my Lord be great according as thou hast said; the Lord is *long-suffering, and of great Mercy, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin* (c). I'll represent also at thy Throne, that it would not be a Thing unworthy of thy *Wisdom* to step in for my Relief, when all other Refuge faileth. I'll search even into the *Archives* of Heaven, and the *Records* of Eternity, since, by a read Extract from the Book of Life, these who are written there are chosen out of the same Lump of Sin and Misery that others are left in. I'll mind the Lord also of the former *Precedents* of his Grace, since these are set down as *Patterns* and Encouragements for *these who shall afterwards believe* (d): And I'll cry unto the Lord, Lord save me as thou hast saved Thousands e're now by thy Grace, thy altogether free Grace: For I have all in me that ever Grace found in any when it prevented them, and that is only Sinfulness, Unworthinets, D Wretched-

(a) Ezek. xix. 20. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. (b) Gal. cx. 3. (c) E. od. xx. iv. 6. (d) 1 Tim. i. 16.

Wretchedness, and Milery. And Lord, I earnestly pray thou may not overlook me, or pass by me in the free Distributions of thy Grace, and Effusions of thy Spirit. *My Spirit is overwhelmed within me, O Lord, and my Heart within me is desolate, hear my Prayer O Lord, and give Ear unto my Supplications; enter not into Judgment with me, for in thy Sight no Flesh living can be justified. I stretch forth my Hands unto thee; my Soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty Land, Selah. Hear me speedily, my Spirit faileth, hide not thy Face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the Pit: Cause me to hear thy Loving-kindness in the Morning; for I lift my Soul to thee. Out of the Depths have I cried unto thee O Lord. Lord, hear my Voice; let thine Ears be attentive to the Voice of my Supplications. If thou Lord shouldest mark Iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand? But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared (a).*

XVI. *Life and Salvation through Christ being a Matter of the utmost Importance, the Soul becomes further inquisitive, and would yet have more Satisfaction in what so infinitely concerns it.*

But, says the Soul, how can this Thing be? How may such a Design be compassed? How can God, in Consistence with his Justice and Holiness, give Life and Salvation to guilty and polluted Rebels? Can there be Life, while Justice, like Cherubims and a flaming Sword, turns every where to keep the Way of the Tree of Life? Can there be Life, while the Curse of God preys upon, and tears out the Vitals of the Soul? What Life, while Sin's Pollution estrangeth and cutteth off from God, the Fountain of Life? *If our Iniquities be upon us, and we pine away in our Sins, how can we then live (b)?* Sure, no Life to the Soul, unless there be such a propitiatory Sacrifice, the Blood of which can at once quench the Flames of Justice, cancel the Curse of the Law, and wash away the Stain of Sin. And where can such a Sacrifice be found in Heaven or in Earth, among Angels,

(a) Psal. cxliii. 2. Psal. cxxx. 1, 2, 3, 4. (b) Ezek. xxxiii. 10.

or among Men? *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come to him with Burnt-offerings, with Calves of an Year old? Will the Lord be pleased with Thousands of Rams, or Ten thousand Rivers of Oil? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul (a)?* Tho' I did, says the sensible Soul, I could not wash off the Stain of the least Sin: Much less atone Justice and appease Wrath for the innumerable Evils that compass me about.

Well, thou hast nothing to offer, O my Soul; yet God has provided himself a Lamb. Come, turn aside then, and see this great Sight: *Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the Sins of the World (b).* Come and see him, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness in the Remission of Sins (c). Arise then, O timorous and pen- sive Soul, and be not scarred off by the Weight and Number of thy Sins, for he calleth and commandeth thee to *behold him.* He saith, *Behold me;* and if once will not satisfy, he saith again, *Behold me, even to a Nation not called by his Name (d).* 'Tis not Presump- tion then to lift up your Eyes and look on him: But 'tis Rebellion to shut the Eyes, and pull away the Shoulder.

Hark, O my Soul! and listen well to the good News the great Lover of Souls tells us, when he says, *I am come that they might have Life, and have it more abundantly (e).* O my Soul, may not thou now see that the great Design and gracious Errand, upon which the blessed Jesus came down to the lower World, was to give Life unto Souls? See now the kind and gracious Intention of the Son; and as little needs thou question the merciful good Will of the Father; since this was the End of Christ's Mission, *and this Commandment he received of his Father, who so loved the World, that he sent his only begotten Son into it, that whosoever believes in him might not perish, but have everlasting Life (f).*

D 2

Hence

(a) Mic. vi. 6, 7. (b) John i. 19. (c) Rom. iii. 25, 26. (d) Isa. lxxv. 1. (e) John x. 10. (f) John iii. 16.

Hence, *he that hath the Son hath Life (a), which shall be as a Well of Water springing higher and higher, till it run into Life eternal (b).*

XVII. *Tho' such a Consideration as this cannot but in some Measure satisfy, yet the Soul is sadly exercised with Discouragements from the natural Enmity of the Heart to God.*

True, *saith the Soul*, this shews indeed a God-like Goodness, and manifests the Redeemer to be *True God, and eternal Life*; Love and Life being his very Essence (c). And all this may well suit, and fully satisfy sensible, compliant, and well-temper'd Souls, who see their Need, and earnestly desire to receive the Atonement: But what is this to me, who have neither Wisdom to see, Strength to get, nor a Heart to seek Reconciliation with God? What blackens my Guilt to the outermost is my Neglect and Contempt of the great Salvation. For whereas the smallest Dawnings of Gospel-Light should have been to my Soul, as Life from the Dead, Oh how little is my Heart affected to God and the blessed Redeemer! Can such a Wretch as I, so impure and so ungrateful, ever expect that the Lord should cast so much as an Eye upon me, unless with such a Look as would stare me out of Being, or into Hell.

But why so pensive, *O exercised Soul!* Why fittest thou so solitary in the Dust? Why art thou so sadly distracted with Thoughts, and distressed with Fears? How grateful and reviving may it be to find, that all our Weakness and Perverseness, our Wickedness and Wretchedness were all foreseen, and considered by him, when he *laid down his Life a Sacrifice for our Sins, and a Ransom for our Souls?* For when we were without Strength, and when we were ungodly, in due Time Christ died for us (d). And what Good can the Lord find in vile Dust, but what he has given? Or what can he foresee, but what he designed to bestow on us?

(a) 1 John v. 12. (b) John ix. 34. (c) 1 John iv. 10. (d) Rom. v. 6.

us? Or is it possible we can be in a worse Condition, than what he foresaw, when he laid down his Life? For whom did the Blessed Saviour die? It was not for well affected Friends, or darling Favourites, but for Sinners, for Enemies, for the Strengthless and Ungodly. And when he did take Pity on us, and said unto us, Live, *It was not for any Comeliness he saw upon us; but when he saw us wallowing in our Blood, in a loathsome and lost Condition, he said unto us, Live (a).*

Say not then, O my Soul, thou art past Hope, but awake from Security and Unbelief, and flee for Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before us (b).

XVIII. *The heavy Burden of Sin, and the weighty Importance of everlasting Salvation, make the Soul still very anxious for a sufficient Saviour.*

But O Eternity, says the Soul, is an amazing Thing; and eternal Concerns are of an awful Importance! It cannot be an easy Thing so much as to be in Suspense, whether I shall be eternally in Joy, or eternally in Torment: And to trust for eternal Life, and eternal Happiness, requires a very sure and strong Foundation. Who is he that cometh to save me? Who is sufficient for such a great and weighty Undertaking? Is he of such Dignity, as can satisfy that Justice which is infinite? Is he of such Power, as can bear and appease that Wrath which exceeds its Fear? Is he of such Vertue, as can cleanse a Soul as black as Hell, or ease me of that Guilt that's heavier than Rocks? I am sure, I need such a strong Redeemer: And I am sure, I need not turn for Help in this, either to Saints or Angels: For what Creature can ease of that, which makes the whole Creation groan?

But, O solicitous Soul, may it not comfort thee, that when the Lord saw there was no Man, and took Notice there was no Intercessor (c), he laid Help on one that was mighty to bear it (d), being the Man that was

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(a) Ezek. xvi. 4, 5, 6. (b) Heb. vi. 18. (c) Isa. lix. 16. (d) Psal. lxxix. 19.

God's own Fellow (a). Why dost thou not *turn into this strong Hold, as a Prisoner of Hope* (b)? Why dost thou not *flee to him, who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him* (c)? Thy Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is his Name (d). Is he strong enough to save from Sin and Death, and Hell, and all the gloomy Powers of Darknes? O yes: For *he hath born our Sins in his Body on the Tree* (e), and nailed them to the Cross; and by Death hath destroyed Death and Hell, and him that had the Power thereof, that is the Devil (f), and hath spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphing over them in the Cross (g): And now has ascended unto Heaven, having led Captivity captive (h).

XIX. *The awakened Soul seeking further Satisfaction as to Christ's Willingness to save.*

I doubt nothing of the *Sufficiency* of Christ, the Saviour, *saith the anxious Soul*. I know he hath Power that could draw me to himself, though all the Gates of Hell, and all the Powers of Darknes were between: I know if *he will, he can make me clean*; my only Doubt is of his *Willingness*. The Consciousness of the Greatness and Number of my Sins, staves me off from him: What Acceptation can I expect, who have so much offended God, and affronted my Redeemer?

But why, O *pensive Soul*, wilt thou doubt of his *Willingness*? In whose Heart came the first Thought of saving Sinners? Sure it came not into the Heart of Men or Angels to desire it, or dream of it. Was it not a Design conceived when thou wert hid in the barren Womb of nothing? Was it not then his own *Self-motion*? And what was it but his own *Good-will* unto the Children of Men, and his *Willingness* to save them, that was the secret Spring, running under Ground from all Eternity, which did burst forth in Time in all the Issues of Goodness, to the transporting Admiration of Angels

(a) Zech. viii. 7. (b) Zech. ix. 12. (c) Heb. vii. 25. (d) Jer. l. 34. (e) 1 Pet. ii. 24. (f) Heb. ii. 14. (g) Col. ii. 15. (h) Eph. iv. 8. Psal. l. viii. 18.

Angels and Men? Was it not hence that he gave his own Son, and founded an eternal Covenant of Love and Peace in him? What could draw a Saviour from Heaven to Earth, and from the Earth to the Cross? What could persuade him to *disrob* himself of *Light*, as of a Garment, and to cloud the Lustre of his *Divinity* by the Interposition of a pale, mortal Body? What but free *Love* and *Willingness* to save, could move him to all this? And from what other Principle would he woo thee to receive Mercy, beseech thee to be happy, and intreat thee to be saved?

And what Doubt can remain of this, when he, the *Amen*, the *Faithful* and the *True*, gives full Assurance, that *him that cometh unto him, he will in nowise cast out* (a)? If he were not willing, why would he command us to come unto him? Is it not the *Father's Commandment*, that *we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ* (b)? And is it not his own Commandment? *Only believe*, says he (c). And how serious and authoritative is he in his Commands: *I said behold me*; and again, *Behold me, even to those that are not called by his Name* (d). Can thou question after this his *Willingness* to give Salvation, when it is not only offered thee by Way of *Grace* and *Kindness*, but also charged on thee by Way of *Authority* and *Command*? And why would he condescend to the lowest Terms imaginable, if he were not willing to save thee? What doth the Lord require of thee, *O my Soul*, in order to be saved? No Merits, no Rivers of Oil, nor Mountains of Prey, no Price, no Pennance; but only come and receive the offered *Gift* of Life and Salvation (f). And is it a hard Matter for thee to receive a free *Gift*, and especially the great and unspeakable *Gift* of Christ, and eternal Life in him. Why dost thou behave as if thou wert grudging either the *Goodness* of God, in giving thee an Offer of eternal Life, or the *Dignity* of the Soul, in being made capable to receive it? Who can doubt of his *Willingness*, who condescends to

(a) John vi. 37. (b) 1 John iii. 23. (c) Mark v. 36. (d) Isa. lvi. 1. (f) John i. 12.

to Terms so low, as that it becomes impossible there should be lower Terms of obtaining any Gift, much less eternal Life and Happiness in Christ.

XX. *The exercised Soul wanting Satisfaction as to present Acceptance, because it has long stood out against Gospel-calls.*

I have no Reason to doubt, *saith the sensible Sinner*, either of Christ's *Ability* or *Willingness* to save me: But alas! I have had already many an Opportunity of Salvation, many a bright Day of the Gospel, many an Offer of a Saviour, and many a loud Call from his Voice; and I have slighted all. I should have given him an hearing Ear, and obedient Heart; and all the Return I made was but a deaf Ear, and a rebellious Spirit. How shall I escape, who have neglected so great a Salvation?

Yet say not, *burdened Soul*, if this be thy Exercise, that thou art past *Hope*. Are not the Stout-hearted and Rebellious invited? *Hearken unto me*, saith he, ye *stout-hearted* (a); and these that have play'd the Harlot with many Lovers invited? *Thou hast play'd the Harlot with many Lovers*, yet return unto me, saith the Lord (b). And are not Backsliders also invited to come unto him? *Return ye backsliding Children* (c). Be of good Cheer then, O contrite Soul, rise, he yet calls thee. Hark, how he knocks, and takes not with the first Repulse, but waiting to be gracious, stands redoubling his Knocks; Behold, saith he, *I stand at the Door, and knock; if any Man will hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in, and sup with him, and he with me* (d). And when thou hast repulsed many Offers of Grace, is not Mercy still importunate with thee? How many Years has free Grace stood at thy Door? Free Grace follows thee, and pursues thee, and looks, O contrite Soul, as if it would not let thee go, till thou hast a Blessing.

XXI. *The*

(a) Isa. xlvi. 12. (b) Jer. iii. 1. (c) Jer. iii. 22. (d) Rev. iii. 20.

XXI. *The jealous Soul questioning its Acceptance with Christ, till it be in a better Frame.*

I believe, and am perswaded, *with the Man*, that all that come to Christ, whatsoever they have been, and whatsoever they have done, shall be accepted of him: But I want the Preparations and Qualifications required in those that would come and apply the blessed Saviour. Were I holy, were I spiritual, were there so much as a Spark of Grace in my Soul, this would encourage me to apply Christ, and receive his Benefits: But instead of this I am but a *Lump* of Corruption, and a *Mass* of Sin: Nor have I ever been sufficiently humbled, and broken in Heart for the same. O the Evils that reign in my Heart! O how hateful is my Condition! Dare such a one as I am lay Claim to such a high and transcendent Favour as Christ and his Benefits?

But why art thou cast down, O *my Soul*, and why disquieted within me? Is *Sorrow* required, thinkest thou, for itself, as if God delighted in Sorrow as such? Could I cast down my Soul as low as the Pit, as low as Hell, this could be no Satisfaction to God for the least Sin. Sorrow and Contrition are subservient to a Closure with Christ the Redeemer: And when they answer this End, they are sufficient. And how can I be holy and spiritual, till first I come to Christ, my Sanctification as well as Redemption? Can I expect Fruit from a barren Branch, before it be ingrafted? Or would I buy Christ's *Righteousness* with the Price of mine; or seek his Righteousness only to seek mine own? What can I find in my self but *sin*, till I come to the Saviour? What Plea can I have but Emptiness, and what Price but Self-denial, according to the free Proclamation of his Grace, *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy Wine and Milk, without Money and without Price (a)? And let him that is a-thirst, come; and who so-*

(a) Isa. lv. i.

whosoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely (a). And now, O thoughtful soul, what canst thou crave more for thy Satisfaction? 'Tis certain indeed, that none can be willing, but such as are truly convinced of the horrible Evil of Sin, the absolute Need of a Saviour, and of his Ability and Willingness to save; but whoever are truly willing are welcome. Can the Terms of Salvation be more easy? Can the Articles of the Covenant be more free? Or can Christ and his Grace be set at a lower Rate? How absolutely impossible is this, either from the Nature of God, or the Nature of the Thing?

XXII. *If now a Light from Heaven bring these Truths near to the Soul, it becomes in some Measure satisfied, as to the Grounds and Warrants of believing.*

O! What could the Lord do more, says the Man, to testify his Regard to Souls, his Willingness to save them, and the Encouragement they have to come unto him? Are there not loud Calls, moving Entreaties, and earnest Invitations made to every One? The Simple, he's invited to come and eat Bread in the Kingdom of God (b): The weary heavy-laden Sinner, he's invited to come to Christ for Rest to his Soul (c). And whosoever will is invited to come and take of the Waters of Life freely (d). When then do I not come? What's to hinder me to come humbly, and come boldly, and apply Christ the Reddemer, to all the Ends and Purposes, the Case and Necessities of my Soul require? Doth not he complain, *Ye will not come to me that ye may have Life* (e)? And doth he not weep, because, when he would have gathered a People, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, they would not (f)? And what can he mean by all this, but the greatest Pity and Compassion to Souls? Hath not the Son of the living God given himself freely for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity (g)? And what Doubt can there be of

(a) Rev. xxii. 17. (b) Prov. ix. 4, 5. (c) Matth. xi. 28. (d) Rev. xxii. 17. (e) John v. 40. (f) Luke xi. 41. (g) Tit. ii. 14.

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his Willingness? Or what Doubt should any poor Soul make of coming to him? What's freer than a *Gift*, a Gift that prevented not only Mens Merits, but their very Thoughts? And doth God hold forth his Son, *a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood* (a)? And may not any bruised Reed find a Ground and Bottom of Peace and Satisfaction? Is not this sufficient to underprop the most heavy-laden, sinking and unsubsisting Soul? Renounce then, O *contrite Spirit*, all slavish Fear and Enmity of Heart. Come see the great Lover of Souls standing and waiting at the Door of thy Heart, till his *Locks be dewed with the Drops of the Night*. Come, feel him pressing upon thy Soul, by a Variety of Methods. He argues with the Soul, *Why do ye spend your Money for that which is not Bread, and your Silver for that which will not profit* (b)? He expostulates with the Soul, *Why will ye die, O House of Israel* (c)? *What Fruit have ye in these Things, whereof ye are now ashamed* (d)? He solemnly protests his Loathness and Unwillingness, that any poor Soul should perish, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no Delight in the Death of Sinners, but rather that they should turn and live* (e). And what greater Security can the broken-hearted Sinner have, than for *Being* itself to pawn his Being, and *Life* itself to pawn his Life in Pledge, that he delights not in our Ruin? O when the blessed Lord doth command, urge, threaten, allure, beseech, and turn himself into all Forms of Persuasion, that Sinners may turn and live, come to Christ, and find Life to their Souls; what Room is left for distrusting his Mercy? And who can doubt of Acceptance with him, who hath accepted a *Paul*, a *Manasseh*, a *Mary Magdalene*; and hath accepted Prodigals, Publicans, Harlots, and Backsliders, when they sincerely turned to him?

But though these Considerations in themselves be very satisfying, yet O the many Conflicts and Tossings of Mind, and its many contrary Resolves! Sometimes the Soul thinks 'tis easy, and at another Time that 'tis a hard

(a) Rom. iii. 25. (b) Isa. lv. 2. (c) Ezek. xviii 31, 32.
(d) Rom. vi. 21. (e) Ezek. xx. iii. 11.

hard Matter to *believe*. Yea, what is the Heart of Man by Nature, but as a deep Pit of Darkness, Fear, and Horror, presenting all the gloomy Views which *Unbelief*, both *speculative* and *practical*, can cast up in ignorant, depraved and guilty Souls : Hence, notwithstanding all these Grounds of Faith,

XXIII. *The exercised Soul is complaining that he cannot believe, as he fain would.*

O, *says the Soul*, all this is comforting enough to the Man that believes; but alas! I cannot believe. Could I trust the Word of God, and rest in his Promises; could I rely on the Satisfaction, and apply the Merits of Christ the Redeemer, all would be well enough with me, and I needed no further Ground of Satisfaction: But I find it a difficult Thing to *believe*, that an *eternal Life* shall be bestowed on such a *vile Worm* as I am; or that such vile Dust should be advanced to such high Glory.

Yet, why, O *thoughtful Soul*, wilt thou not believe? Is it because thou fearest that such a great *Being* as the self-sufficient God, will not deign to take Notice of such a mean and silly Thing as thou art? But who then brought thee out of the Womb of nothing? Who made thee a Man, and not a senseless Thing? And who is it that daily keeps in thy Breath, and hitherto hath preserved thee? And on whom dost thou not depend for thine All? Is it not on God thou dependest for every Breath thou drawest, and for every Motion of thy Pulse, and for every Hair of the Threed of thy Life? Is it not *in him we live, move, and have our Beings* (a)? Why then wilt thou imagine, that because *he is high, he will not take Notice of the Children of Men*; or that he will *forsake the Works of his own Hands* (b)?

Or is thy Difficulty in believing, because thou canst not see in Reason, how such a poor, frail, dying Creature as Man, should look for so vast a Benefit as eternal Life? But for what End, O *doubtful Soul*, canst thou then

(a) Acts .vii. 23. (b) 1 sal. cxxviii. 8.

then imagine Man was made at all? Were there no Prospect of a future State, 'tis certain there could be no *Religion* towards God; and *Reason* would be but tormenting and hurtful to Man. What then could thou suppose to be the End of Man's Make? Is he made only for a Life of *Covetousness*, that is, that he should live in a continual Scramble and Hurry, rise early and sit up late; and when all is done, either lament his Losses, or else his unsatisfying Enjoyments, till Death comes, and ends the Story? Considering the Vanity and Vexation that inseparably attends every *Hunter* after this World, and how all his Satisfaction doth not requite the *Half* of his Pain and Sorrow; may it not be plausibly enough alledged, That the delirious Person at *Athens*, who fancied all Ships that came into the Haven were his, was in a happier Condition than the covetous Miser, since his Comfort was more, and his Care less; and they are equal in this, that all seems *Delusion*.

Or is Man made for a Life of *Sensuality*? But consider, O my Soul, (besides the unsatisfying and momentary Nature of these Things) what View canst thou suppose the wise Creator to have in this; if instead of Man's eating and drinking that he might live, and live to some valuable Purpose, he were made to live only, that he might eat and drink, and indulge himself in sensual Delights? And for what End then served the noble Powers of his Soul? Is it not evident then, that such an End were neither worthy of God, nor worthy of Man?

Or is Man made only for a Life of worldly Honour? But how vain is the Thought in imagining you should be made happy by these you judge your Inferiors, or made better by these you think not so good as your selves? And would not the Means here destroy their End? While if you pursue Honour, it flies from you; and if you fly from it, it will follow thee. The *Proud* then cannot attain it, and the *Humble* do not much affect it. How vain a Thing would Man be, if this were his End; an End so difficult to attain, and so little worth when attained?

O thoughtful Soul, be not then entangled and ensnared with the Ambiguity and Crossness of thine own Reasonings, since in fair Reason, if thou believest thou art made by a wise and good *Agent*, thou canst not but be firmly perswaded, that thou art made for greater Purposes than what can be in any earthly Enjoyment.

Or is thy Difficulty in believing, because through Sin thou hast forfeited all Right to Life and Happiness? Here indeed is the most perplexing Strait, and the most *confounding* Thought: And, *O my Soul*, mince not Matters here, offer not to justify thy self, nor to extenuate thy Faults, but freely and humbly acknowledge, that not only thou deserves no Life nor Happiness, but that thou deserves the contrary; that pure Wrath and unmixed Vengeance is all that thou deserves; and that the least Benefit, yea any Thing on this Side of Hell, is a Mercy to such a poor Sinner. But, *O contrite Soul*, where hadst thou been long e'er now, if this had been the Rule of Divine Procedure with thee? Hadst thou not long before this Time dropt into Hell irrecoverably?

In all Humility therefore represent unto the Lord, that 'tis not our Desert that is the Measure of his Government at the Throne of Grace, but 'tis the Glory of God, in Conjunction with the Happiness of Man, being 'tis a Throne of Mercy, yet founded on *Justice* and *Righteousness* (a); else for what End did the Son of the living God come down among us, and tabernacle in our Nature? And why did he veil the Splendor of his Godhead, and die in our Room? Was not his End in all this, that he might save us from Sin, and might have a *ransomed People* (b); and *that we might sit with him upon his Throne* (c).

Again thou sayst, thou canst not believe. But be-
think thy self, *O exercised Soul*, better in this Business; for if thou dost not believe, how is it that thou still hangs on Christ? And why cannot all the World part you and him? Why wouldst thou rather live *eternally* with Christ in Glory, than chuse, if it were possible,

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(a) Psal. lxxxix. 14. (b) Isa. liii. 11. (c) Rev. iii. 21.

an eternal Life on Earth, in the Confluence of all worldly Enjoyments? And wouldst rather quit all Things in the World, than quit a Claim to the *excellent* Jesus? And how couldst thou find so much Delight in the Word of God, and wouldst rather have a *Promise* without a *Possession*, than a *Possession* without a *Promise*? And why wouldst thou be content of any Affliction, in order to get rid of Sin, and be fully conform to the blessed Redeemer? Can such Dispositions be in a Soul where *Faith* is not? As soon imagine that Fruits shall grow where there is not a *Root*.

But is it so indeed, that thou canst not believe? Yet, *O exercised Soul*, tho' thou canst not compass a *Promise*, yet set a *Mark* upon it, and say, It shall have my weak Heart, and poor Endeavours, till God shall fulfil my Desires. I deserve not, *says the humble Soul*, to look up to Heaven, the Place of God's Throne, nor even to breathe in God's Air, nor tread on his Foot stool; yet being that free Promises are issued out to all poor Sinners, I'll keep an Eye on these Promises, which are so many Branchings out of God's Covenant; at least I'll salute them afar off (a). I'll be like *Benhadad's* Servants, watching the Words that hint Remission and Life (b): And like the Woman of *Canaan*, glad to pick up the very Crumbs (c).

I know that no Improvements of *Pharisaical* Righteousness, no religious Performances, no Conditions to be wrought out of my self, can effect Faith. I cannot spin it out from the Nerves of mine own Strength; yet I'll urge my Heart to close with the excellent Redeemer. And O that God would urge it to an intire Resignation to his *Promises* and *Precepts*! What! Is there before my Door, through Corruption and Sin, a horrible Gulf of eternal Darkness and Death? And have I nothing to do with my precious and immortal Soul, but to throw it in, when I know of a Saviour, who is both able to save, and earnestly desirous to save me? O! I may not *slubber* over this Business: I'll leave no Duty un essayed, and no Means untried; I'll

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(a) Heb. xi. 13. (b) 1 Kings xx. 33. (c) Matth. xv. 27.

press this Matter hard upon my Soul; and I cannot think of giving it over, till I am perswaded and enabled to believe.

Yet because there is no Power in us to fasten on a Promise, unless God draw by his perswasive and overpowering Grace; therefore, *says the Soul*, I'll fall down before the Throne of Grace, I'll bow my Knees unto the Lord, and I'll beg that he may make Way into my Spirit, and cause me, from an inward prevalent Principle, yield myself unto him. O heavenly *Light* come yet nearer to my Conscience, with more pointed and peremptory Demands, and nearer to my Mind by a more clear Display of *the unsearchable Riches of Christ*, and the Glory of free Grace shining in him; and by my Mind strike with a vital *Efficacy* upon my Heart, and put all the Powers of my Soul into a suitable Motion towards Christ the Redeemer! And when so,

XXIV. *The Soul flees unto Christ, and lays hold on him for the Remission of Sins.*

If I sit still under the Power and Guilt of all my Sins, I shall die; but if I put my self, says the Soul, in the Hands of Christ, if he save me I shall live, if he save me not I shall but die. But surely I shall not die, if I can truly cast my self on my Redemer: For besides the desperate Necessity I am in which may thrust me forward to a bold Undertaking, I find sure and sweet Promises, that all who come to him shall live. Hence I am resolute to cast my Soul upon him, and put all my everlasting Interests into his Hands. The Matter indeed is awful, weighty and important, and causes great Thoughts of Heart, and great Workings of Mind; but I see nothing for me but one Thing, and that is, *fleeing to the Redeemer's Grace*. The Sense of Sin doth seize indeed my Soul with Terror; *but hath not the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all* (a)? Terrors from the Almighty do astonish me; but had not my Blessed Saviour a deep Sense of the Wrath of God, when

(a) Isa. liii. 6.

when his Soul was amazed, *astonished, and sorrowful even unto Death*, and being in an Agony, *he offered up Prayers and Supplications, and strong Cries and Tears, and was heard in that he feared* (a)? Dogs of Hell, even rabid Devils compass me about with their horrid Temptations; but was not my Saviour tempted in like Manner, even to Infidelity, Idolatry and Distrust (b), tho' Satan could find nothing in him. And why should our Sins be laid on Christ, but that he might take them off us? Why should he suffer Impressions of Wrath, but to deliver us from the same? And why should he be tempted, but to succour and deliver us when tempted? And therefore I flee for Refuge to this Hope set before me; I'll fix my Heart on Christ, and rely on him as the Lord my Righteousness; with both Arms of Faith, I'll fold about my Redeemer, and not let him go till he bless me. What Profit, O Lord, would there be in my Blood, or if I should be let go down to the Pit whence there is no Redemption for ever? 'Tis the Living, the Living that praise thee, for the Dead and Damned cannot sing forth thy Glory, as I desire to do this Day, and my Heart desires to do through all Eternity. And will not high sounding Praises of redeeming Grace be more grateful in the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, than the Howlings of a wretched and damned Ghost? I will then look to Christ for Salvation: I'll look to him and his rich Merit and Grace. I roll my Soul upon him, and look for Remission of Sin only at his Hands: And *tho' he should slay me, I'll trust in him*, and rest in this, that he will not forsake or destroy, but preserve the Work of his own Hands: For, O gracious Redeemer, 'tis not the Preservation of Sin's Work or Satan's Work that I am seeking at thy Hands; these I would have utterly and finally destroyed; but 'tis the Preservation of this Soul or this Spirit thou hast formed within me, and in particular, that it may be saved from Sin and its Guilt, that I wait for, and expect. I cannot think of lying under the Guilt of all my Sins, a Load enough to sink

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(a) Mark xiv. 33. Matth. xxvi. 38. Heb. v. 7. (b) Matth. iv.

me into the lowest Hell; and therefore I make a spiritual Adventure in *casting my Burden on the Lord* (a), and in staying my Soul on the Blessed Redeemer, having no less Warrant than his Command, and no less Encouragement than his Promise. It shall not be the Sense of my Sinfulness and Unworthiness that shall keep me off from Christ; being sure, that if ever I get Help, it must come from Christ's Hand; for *to whom can I go, O Lord, but to thee, thou hast the Words of eternal Life* (b). Yea, what else have I to bring to Christ, but a Sense of mine own Unworthiness and Vileness (c), and a certain Persuasion of his Sufficiency and Readiness to save me, according to the good Word that hath proceeded from his Mouth: And sure I am *that the Strength of Israel cannot lie* (d), and that Grace itself, and Faithfulness itself will not shrink back; therefore I'll never give over looking to thee, and hanging on thy Word, but I'll thrust my Soul upon thy Promises, and bear my self on thy Faithfulness. And I do no more, O gracious Redeemer, than what thou gives me Leave to do, when I *believe in thee for Remission of my Sins* (e); as here I do by thy Grace: And I trust thee, O merciful Father and compassionate Saviour, with all the great and eternal Interests of my precious and immortal Soul.

But tho' the first Thing that a broken-hearted Sinner finds Relief from is, Christ's priestly Office in the Remission of Sins and Deliverance from Hell; for the News of a Prophet that enlightens the Mind can give little Ease to a wounded Spirit, the Question still remaining, who shall save me from the Curse of the Law, and the Torments of Divine Vengeance: And the Report of a great and mighty King can yield but small Comfort to a Soul that is already thunder-struck with the Terrors of that Wrath which is infinitely powerful.

But though this be so, that the first Ease to a Sin-burdened Soul, and the first healing Balm to a wounded Spirit is from the priestly Office of Christ, which at-

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(a) Psal. lv. 22. (b) John vi. 68. (c) Isa. lv. 1. (d) 1 Sam. xv. 29. (e) Rom. iii. 25, 26.

tones Justice, appeases Wrath, takes away Sin, and saves from Hell; yet

XXV. *The gracious Soul rests not in an Application of Christ's priestly Office, but heartily and absolutely consents unto him as a Prophet and a King.*

Did I say, that I would believe in the blessed Redeemer for the Remission of Sins? I'll stand to this. But he shall be also my Prince and my Lord. O I consent, *says the Believer*, fully to Christ. Why? Whatever Way I view him, whether as a Priest, or as a Prophet, or as a King, I see incomparable Excellencies and ravishing Beauties in him; and nothing at all unsuitable, or unlovely. I consent also sincerely and absolutely unto the amiable Jesus. There shall be no Conditions, no Limitations, and no secret Reserves in my Acceptation of him; whether in the Office of a Prophet, or a Priest, or a King: But I'll say, *Teach me thy Way, for through Grace I resolve to walk in thy Truth*(a). *Speak Lord, for thy Servant heareth* (b). *That which I know not teach thou me*; and enable me to practise that which I know. I would be as fain sanctified as pardoned; as fain delivered from the Power and Pollution, as from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin; and I would as fain apply Christ Jesus for Sanctification as for Salvation: Yea, I account that Sanctification is Salvation, Heaven and Happiness to my Soul: And for this End, O I readily and gladly consent to thee, *my Saviour and my Prince, my Lord and my God, my Portion and my Happiness, my All and my only One! Whom have I in the Heavens high, but Thee, O Lord, and in the Earth there is none my Soul desires; besides thee* (c).

XXVI. *The Soul enters into a Soliloquy with itself, in order to be more clear as to its closing with Christ.*

O my Soul, art thou pleased with Christ and his Benefits? Yes, I am well pleased with precious Christ, and the

(a) Psal. lxvi. 11. (b) 1 Sam. iii. 10. (c) Psal. lxiii. 25.

the precious Benefits of his Purchase. O my Soul, dost thou consent to a whole Christ? *Yes*, I consent to him as a Prince and a Saviour; I resent it deeply that other Lords should have had Dominion over me, and I would have Christ to save me, not only from Hell, but from the Power, Pollution and Dominion of Sin, which I reckon as a Hell in my Breast. O my Soul, dost thou consent unto Christ with all thy Heart? *Yes*, I yield to give the Key of my Heart to Christ, that he may dwell in it, and quicken and sanctify and rule it, and enrich it with his Grace. I love thee, O Lord, with all my Heart and Strength, and I'll be for thee and not for another: *For my beloved is mine and I am his (a)*. O my Soul, art thou willing then to part with all thy Sins, Lusts, Idols, and Vanities for Christ's Sake? *Yes*, I agree to this with my Heart; I renounce my Pride, my Worldliness, my Sensuality, and every corrupt Passion and Lust, and the Sin in special that so easily besets me; and I prefer a humble, holy, heavenly, mortified Life to all the Pleasures of Sin. Blessed Jesus, Prince of the Kings of the Earth, I am willing to part with my Sins and come to thee: Yea, I come to thee for this End, that I may get free of my Sins and be parted from them. O my Soul, dost thou renounce this World, and all its Pomp, Glory and Delights, when they come in Competition with Christ? *Yes*, I am most willing to do this, and find the highest Complacency of Spirit when I count all Things but Loss and Dung in Comparison of Christ, *who loved me, and gave himself for me (b)*. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, O Lord, and upon Earth there is none I desire besides thee (c)*. O my Soul, art thou willing to renounce Selfishness, and deny thy Self-Righteousness? *Yes*, I go out of myself that I may be found in Christ, *not having mine own Righteousness which is according to the Law, but the Righteousness which is of God by Faith (c)*. Were even Life and Salvation possible any other Way than by the Righteousness of Christ, I would chuse it this Way rather. I chuse above all Things

(a) Cant. ii. 16. (b) Gal. ii. 20. (c) Psal. lxxiii. 25. (c) Philip. iii. 9.

Things to be beholden eternally to Christ, and to have Life and Salvation as a free Donation from him, and as the Fruit of his immense Love. I like best to receive all Things that pertain either to a Life of Grace, or a Life of Glory, from the Hands of *Immanuel*. Dost thou then, O my Soul, give away thyself entirely to the Lord? O yes, I surrender myself, and all that I have, or can do, to him, and for his Service and Glory. And this through Grace I do *heartily*: My Heart is in the Transaction. O my Soul, *thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord* (a). This, through Grace, I do *sincerely*, as in the Sight of God, without any Allowance of Sin in my Heart. This, through Grace, I do *absolutely*, having no Terms of mine own making to propose to the Lord, but to be glad of his Terms, and cheerfully to accept of them, as here, *I sell all Things to buy this Pearl of Price* (b). And this, through Grace, I do *constantly*; as this is a Transaction that is without Relieve, so it shall be without Revocation for ever. Amen, so be it for ever. Amen.

XXVII. *The gracious Soul cannot be perswaded, but that this Method of obtaining pardoning Mercy and Grace, and thereby true Peace and Comfort, is most reasonable Christianity.*

How else, O *sinful Dust*, canst thou have Hope of God's Favour without a Righteousness, and the Application of it by Faith? *Is he a God that can take Pleasure in Wickedness, or can Evil dwell with him* (c)? *Is he not of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity* (d)? And is not Sin the *abominable Thing* he abhors (e)? Or can thou think, that thy Amendment, which at best is but partial, and which is attended with more Evil to condemn, than any Good that can be so much as tolerate, much less be approven, is sufficient to atone for, or absolve from these innumerable Offences committed against the most high God, who is just and jealous, and

who

(a) Psal. xvi. 2, (b) Matth. xiii. 46. (c) Psal. v. 4. (d) Hab. i. 13. (e) Jer. xlv. 4.

who searcheth the Hearts, and trieth the Reins of the Children of Men? Or dost thou think that the blessed Jesus, *who came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*, laid down his Life, that thou mightst have Right to Life by an imperfect Righteousness; or which is the same, be justified without a Righteousness? What would be thought of the *Holy Jesus*, that *righteous One*, if he had died to procure a Liberty to Sin, or an Indulgence in Sinning? Or died to procure Acceptance with God without a Righteousness? What would be thought of the *Holiness* of God, that *sacred and venerable Attribute* which strikes the very Angels with awful Veneration and Fear, if it could be dispensed and remitted at Pleasure? And what would be thought of the *Truth* of God, and of his *Judgment*, which is always according to Truth, if he pronounced these to be righteous, that are not? And sure, without the Application of Christ's Righteousness, *there is none righteous, no not one.*

But now in the Justification of a Sinner, through the gifted and imputed Righteousness of Christ, who is God-man, all the Divine Attributes kythe in their Colours, and shine in their brightest Splendor, and more to the eternal Wonder and Rapture of Angels and Men, than any other Way. Here Mercy is magnified to the uttermost in the pardoning of the Sins of many for the Merit of one: And his Justice, in that he spared not a Son, because a Surety for Sinners: And his Wisdom, in finding out the Way of punishing the Sin, and pardoning the Sinner. O the Glory and Harmony of all the Divine Attributes in this gracious OEconomy! Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace here kiss one another. O here is Love to the outermost; Mercy in its highest Perfection; Justice, Wisdom and Power visibly to be seen in their brightest Splendor!

And that Faith, which is the most self-emptying and self-denying Grace, is made the noble Correspondence between my Sinfulness and Christ's Righteousness; my Emptiness and Christ's Fulness; my Weakness and Christ's Strength; my Deadness and Christ's Life: O can any Thing be better contrived? Is not this Method altogether

other worthy of God? And doth it not give us the highest Sentiments of all his glorious Excellencies? And is it not altogether suitable to the Necessities of Man; while there is an Offer and Exhibition of such Things, which, as a miserable Sinner, I absolutely need, and as a rational Creature I cannot but desire to have; and in the Way they can only be applied, which is, by receiving what I want, and not pretending to give what I have not, or do what I cannot.

XXVIII. *The Believer reviewing the Wisdom and Goodness of God in the Way and Manner our great Salvation is offered, acquiesces in the same with high Complacency of Spirit.*

O what admirable Things do I see, will he say, in the Scheme of our Salvation, as laid down to us in the Gospel! How well and wisely is it contrived, that Faith in Christ for the Remission of Sin is made the great Principle, influencing every Grace! for without it no Grace or good Qualification could ever be in the Soul. Without Faith, the Fear of God would have made the Soul as a hideous Darkness full of Spectres and horrid Visions: Sorrow and Contrition of Soul for Sin would be but Gnawings of Conscience: Humility and Self-denial would be Heartlessness and Abjection of Mind: Resignation would be rather from Stiffness than yielding of the Will to God: And Love to God, or to Men, or to ourselves would be but from the Teeth; since without Belief of Pardon, the Man that dares think of his State, would be little pleased with his Friends, and less yet with himself, and least of all with God. O how excellently then is it ordered, that there is so much Stress laid in the Gospel on believing in Christ for Remission of Sin through his Name!

Again, what Mercy is there in it and Wisdom, that the Offers and Invitations of the Gospel are general and indefinite! so that every one that thirsteth, and every one that will, may come and receive of the Waters of Life

Life (a). Had there been any Exception of any Sinner that's willing, then the most enlightened Person that sees most of the Evil of Sin, and the most humble Soul that's readiest to conclude himself the greatest Sinner, would have stood most off from embracing the Call of the Gospel: And so the most needy and most desirous of Grace would have kept farthest from it. How well is it then contrived, that the most self-abased Soul may with Hope and Confidence draw near to Christ!

Again, what Mercy is there in it, that Christ refuses none who seek his Help, and rejects none that come to him! as he himself saith, *Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out (b).* Had there been but one Instance since the Creation of the World, of any one that came with a true and sincere Heart to Christ, and yet was rejected of him, what Diffidence and Distrust would this have caused in the Heart of every poor Sinner; even such as would have made him very heartless in any Address to Christ. How wonderful then is the Wisdom and Grace of our Redeemer in settling Matters so, as that a broken-hearted Sinner can be able to say with Confidence, that if the Lord reject me, who with all my Heart do here come to him, it would be the first Instance of his so rejecting a poor Soul, since Man was made upon the Earth.

What Mercy is there in it, and excellent Wisdom, that the weary heavy-laden Sinner is expressly, and by Name, invited to come unto Christ, who saith, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (c).* If there is a deep Gash in the Spirit of Man through Sense of Sin, and if the Spirit of Bondage and Work of Humiliation be more than ordinary in him, then the Language of his Soul is, Who can draw near to a holy God? And so he could not think of coming unto Christ, but rather would flee from him as a provoked Judge: And so the most broken and wounded in Spirit would be furthest from seeking after the Physician. How admirably then is it contriv'd, that the *weary, the heavy-laden, the poor, the blind, the lame,*

(a) Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. (b) John vi. 37. (c) Matth. xi. 28.

lame, the naked, the broken in Heart and wounded in Spirit have a special Intimation of Grace made to them, and are expressly invited to share of the same!

What Mercy is there in it, that there's no Sort of Sin but what we have an Instance of the Pardon of the same in the sacred Scriptures, except the Sin of obstinate refusing the Pardon! Had it been otherwise, considering that the Seeds and Principles of all Sins are lurking in every Man's Heart by Nature, which a serious Inspection into the holy Law of God, and a narrow Observation of the Heart in its secret Workings will soon discover: In that Case the very Best, and who have most Light to see most of the Evil of Sin, and the Plagues of their own Heart, would be most apt to make the most dreadful Conclusions against themselves, to the turning away their Hearts from Christ. O the rich Mercy and manifold Wisdom of God there is in this! that not only no Sinner is excluded from the Offers of Pardon upon Faith and Repentance; but also, there is no Kind of Sin, but what we have a Record of its actual Pardon: That no Man may be left without Hope, but all may seek unto Christ, and sue for his Mercy and Grace.

Again, what Mercy is there in it, saith the Believer, and what excellent Wisdom is manifested, that the Offers of Christ and his redeeming Grace are free, altogether free, without any Money and without any Price! *He that is athirst may come, and whoever will, may come, and he that hath no Money may come, and buy and eat; yea come, buy Wine and Milk without Money and without Price, being justified freely by his Grace through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus (a).* By Nature there dwelleth no Good in us, and what had we then to give unto God? We are vile, and what had we to recommend us to God? And we are impotent, and what could we do unto him? How impossible then were it, that ever we could be redeemed, if it had depended on any Thing we are, have, or can do. Besides, if all the Hope of Redemption had turned upon what One hath been, or what he now is in a natural

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State,

(a) Rev. xxii. 17. Isa. lv. 1. Rom. iii. 24.

State, then the most ignorant of the Holiness of God, and the Purity of his Law, and the least acquainted with the Evils of the Heart and Life, would trust most to Christ, and hope most from him: Which would be against the Reason and Nature of Things, as well as the Nature of God. And on the other Hand, the most enlightned, who by seeing the Evil of their Sins, do judge and condemn themselves for the same, and do most justify the Holiness and Justice of God, and give him the Glory of his Attributes, would be farthest from hoping in Christ's Grace, and so from valuing him. And so how impracticable would the Salvation of any of Mankind be in such a State of Things? O the Mercy and Wisdom of God, that the Offers of the Gospel are so laid, as that Grace is given to all that see they need it, and see themselves so well, as to own they do not deserve it, and are made to value it as more precious than Rubies, and all the Things that can be desired!

XXIX. *The Believer finding the sure Grounds he goes upon, in receiving Christ for Righteousness and Life, he is put into a strange Muse, what so much Grace and Goodness to him should mean.*

'Tis strange, says the Man, that the Lord should in the least notice me, a poor silly Worm, whose Habitation is in the Dust, and who am crushed before the Moth! 'Tis strange that I should meet with any Favour, who deserve to be cast into Darkness among raging Devils, gnawing Worms, and unquenchable Flames! Certainly any Thing on this Side of Hell is Mercy to me. 'Tis of the Lord's Mercy I am not consumed^(a). The least Off-fallings of common Mercy are more than I deserve. But that the Prince of Life should lay down his Life for the ransoming of my Soul from Hell and Death, O! Wonderful!

And further, that I should have an Offer of this Life, and be earnestly called to receive the same; O! how taking and overcoming is this Thought!

That

(a) Lam. iii. 22.

That such an One as I should have the least Glimpse of Mercy, the least Hope of Reconciliation with God: I, such a loathsome Miscreant by Nature: I, so vile a Worm, and whose Nature is a Sink of Sin, and a Hell of Horror: O astonishing Goodness!

But that the Lord of Heaven, who needed me not in my best Estate, should not only give me an Offer of Life and Salvation, but by Grace cause me also embrace the same: What shall I say of such immense and ineffable Goodness? *Is this the Manner of Man, O Lord? Thy Thoughts are not as our Thoughts, nor thy Ways as our Ways (a): O the Breadth, the Length, the Height and Depth of infinite Love!* What finite Capacity can dive into it? O boundless Goodness and essential Love! Endless Eternity, thou art not sufficient to express how great is this Goodness, Kindness and Love!

XXX. *While the Believer's Heart thus museth, the Fire of Love burneth, and his Affections are kindled to the Blessed Redeemer.*

I love the Lord, *says the Believer*, who, tho' infinitely possessed of all amiable Excellencies in himself, hath yet vouchsafed to set his Love on such as I am, so mean and so contemptible as a Creature, and so vile and so hateful as a Sinner. O! I love that excellent One for what he is, and what he hath, and what he hath done for poor lost Souls! O blessed Saviour, I am resolved never to have a hard Thought of thee after this: Who could do more to testify thy Love to us than thou hast done? I see through the Wounds in thy Side, the Love that flamed in thy Heart. O but Christ is precious, and shall ay be precious to my Soul! Let him frown; let him threaten; let him afflict; yet nevertheless I'll love him!

But what's my Love, but some poor Thoughts and languid Passions, that bear no Measure of Proportion to that infinite Loveliness there is in him; and that in-

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finite

(a) Isa. lv. 8.

finite Love he beareth to me! O that I could love thee more, my dearest Redeemer, and serve thee better! *Whom have I in the Heavens high, but thee, O Lord? I count all Things but Loss and Dung for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ (a). O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee; My Soul thirsteth, my Flesh longeth for thee (b). My Heart breaketh for the Longing it hath to thee, and thy Statutes continually (c).*

XXXI. *When such warm Affection glows in the Breast, it cannot be confined, but bursteth forth in Commendation of the blessed Jesus.*

The Heart of a Believer by this Time comes to be very full of Christ; and being too narrow to contain such high and big Sentiments, as it entertains, of the lovely and loving Redeemer, it cannot confine itself, but saith, as the Lord liveth I will shew my self: I will utter my Love to the amiable Jesus.

But yet being utterly at a Loss to express the Sense of the Heart, it knows not well what to say, but compares him to this and that, and the other delightful Object; and perhaps to the first desirable Thing it sees; and infinitely prefers him to them all. *His Countenance, says the devout Believer, is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars (d). I sat down under his Shadow, and his Fruit was sweet to my Taste (e). My Beloved is fairer than the Sons of Men (f): Yea fairer than the Sons of God. And this Man shall be my Peace (g). This God-Man is my only refreshing Shadow from all the scorching Beams of Divine Justice: And of him will I say, Here is my Rest, and here will I dwell, both safely and pleasantly. And although the Fig-tree should not blossom, although the Labour of the Olive should fail, and no Fruit be in the Vine; yet his Fruit shall ay be sweet to my Taste (h).*

XXXII. *The*

(a) Philip. iii. 8. (b) Psal. lxi. 1. (c) Psal. cxix. 20. (d) Cant. v. 13. (e) Cant. ii. 3. (f) Psal. xlv. 3. (g) Mic. v. 5. (h) Hab. iii. 17.

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XXXII. *The Heart that's so full of Christ, cannot rest in generals, but comes to be very particular in the Description and Commendation of the excellent Jesus.*

Can I hold, faith the Believer, with only a general View and Notion of my dear Redeemer? No, I cannot refrain; I must proceed to a more particular as well as delightful Contemplation of all the amiable Excellencies (if possible) of the Blessed Jesus, and their universal Suitableness to my Wants, and Savouriness to my spiritual Senses: For who but Christ unto me? Who so suited? Who so exactly fitted to precious Souls, as the excellent Jesus, the Prince of Life, the King of Glory, the Darling of Heaven, and the Delight of Angels and Men? Whatever Way I view thee, O lovely and loving Redeemer, there is enough to ravish the Hearts of all the Saints and Angels in Heaven!

And now will I sing a Song of my Beloved. "Thou art *Man* indeed, O excellent Redeemer, but thou art also *God-Man*, and therefore the Man that is God's Fellow (a). Thou art *God*, and therefore thy Countenance is altogether Divine: And thou art *Man*, and hereby God is visibly to be seen, and familiarly to be enjoyed in thee. Thou art *God*, and therefore thou art an infinite Ocean of all Excellencies: And thou art *Man*, and therefore all Beauties whatsoever, created or uncreated, material or immaterial, are formally or eminently in thee. Thou art *God*, and therefore possessest of all Perfections: And thou art *Man*, and therefore these Perfections of thine are enjoyable by Man as his Necessities require, or his Capacity can admit. O Flower of all Perfection! No Wonder Saints and Angels are ravished with thy God-like Visage, Loveliness and Love!"

"In thee, O eternal Son of God, are Light, Truth and Wisdom, as in their first Seat, and enough to charm

F 3

(a) Zech. xiii. 7.

" charm the Eyes of every Beholder for ever. Thou
 " art the Light of Life, the Light of Heaven, the Son
 " of the Morning, the Son of Glory: And whatsoever
 " is lightsome, or pure, or pleasant, or joyful in
 " Heaven or in Earth, is a Ray of the Light, Know-
 " ledge and Wisdom that are in thee as the Treasury
 " of them. And that Wisdom of God that is in thee,
 " shines with such an infinite Variety of Draughts,
 " Counsels and Contrivances, as attracts the Eyes of
 " all the Angels in Heaven (a). The very hidden Treas-
 " ures of the Divine Wisdom and Knowledge are
 " opened up in our IMMANUEL (b); and the fullest
 " View of the Mystery of God and of the Father,
 " and of Christ, is to be seen in him (c).

" And what can be said either more or less of thy
 " Goodness and Love, but that 'tis God-like Goodness,
 " and God-like Love! 'Tis Goodness itself, and Love
 " itself: Goodness in a thousand Shapes, and Love
 " with a thousand Charms: O Goodness that is infi-
 " nitely so, and therefore can satiate the Soul with
 " Pleasures and Delights: A Goodness that is purely
 " so, and therefore can never glut in giving Satisfac-
 " tion. O amiable One, there are no Clouds in thy
 " Brows, no Frown on thy Face at all, but thy Coun-
 " tenance is fair as the Moon, and clear as the Sun;
 " and thou art all Smiles, Ravishments and Delights.

" And O the Beauty of thy Holiness! Thou art the
 " HOLY THING by Way of Singularity and Eminency
 " (d). *There is no Spot in thee at all* (e). *Thou art Light,*
 " *and in thee is no Darkness at all* (f). This is the
 " Beauty of thy Face, and an Excellency that is so
 " amiable, so God-like, so ravishing, as that it strikes
 " all in Heaven into eternal Rapture, who with Tran-
 " sport and Extasy cry out, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord*
 " *God Almighty* (g)."

" Nor art Thou to be less commended for thy Power.
 " And indeed, O excellent One, thou never appeared
 " more

(a) 1 Pet. i. 12. (b) Col. ii. 3. (c) Col. ii. 2. (d) Luke i. 35.
 (e) Cant. iv. 7. (f) 1 John i. 5. (g) Rev. iv. 8.

“ more amiable than when thou came from *Bozrah*,
 “ *with thy Garments died in red Blood (a)*, having by
 “ Death given Death and Hell their Death's Wound,
 “ and vanquished all their gloomy Power. O it was
 “ well done this of Thee! O it was heroically done!
 “ And let the Crown for ever flourish on thy Head.
 “ Consubstantial Son of God, *Thou art fairer than*
 “ *the Sons of Men. (b)*, fairer than the Sons of God,
 “ brighter than the most refined Seraphim.”

“ Was it not Thou, O Lord, who, when poor Sin-
 “ ners were sitting in Darkness and the Shadows of
 “ Death, amidst Confusion, Fear and Horror, that
 “ made them see a great and marvellous Light! Was
 “ it not Thou, when awakened and contrite Souls
 “ found the Guilt of Sin bringing such a horrid Gloom
 “ upon their Conscience, as made them grim like
 “ Hell and Death; Was it not Thou, that not only
 “ offered thy self a Sacrifice to expiate their Sin, re-
 “ move their Guilt, and save them from Hell; but also
 “ presented and applied this Sacrifice so close to their
 “ Souls, as made a light Heart, a smiling Conscience,
 “ and a serene Spirit in the Soul that was deeply dis-
 “ tressed before? Was it not Thou, O Lord, who
 “ when the poor Sinner saw himself wretchedly pol-
 “ luted with the Filth and Stain of Sin; Was it not
 “ Thou *that hath washed him in thy Blood (c)*, and
 “ made him glorious within with Raiment of Needle-
 “ work, and Cloathing of wrought Gold, and so fit to
 “ be seen among Angels and pure Spirits. O thou art
 “ perfect Excellency! the Brightness of thy Father's
 “ Glory, and the express Image of thy Father's Per-
 “ son; And let thy Name be excellent in all the Earth,
 “ and thy Glory exalted above the Heavens.”

“ And as for *Graces*, the unmeasured Fountain and
 “ Treasury of them is in Thee, O wonderful IMMA-
 “ NUEL, to be poured out and disbursed according as
 “ we want, need, and can desire. Yea, Thou art an
 “ overflowing Fountain of all Fulness, not waiting
 “ for our Merit, but preventing it, not waiting for
 “ our

(a) Ita. lxiii. 1. (b) Psal. xlv. 2. (c) Rev. i. 5.

" our good Capacity, but making it, not waiting for
 " our good Desires, but creating them; not giving be-
 " cause we are worthy, but to make us so. Blessed
 " Jesus, how full of Grace, Goodness, Sweetness and
 " Excellency art thou! Let any comprehend, if they
 " can, the Riches, the Fulness, the Freeness, the Ef-
 " ficacy of thy Grace. Heavens sound with thy
 " Praises!" For

" Glorious Things are spoken of the Son of the living
 " God. It is He that revealed *Peace on Earth and*
 " *Good-will to the Children of Men.* It is He that hath
 " purchased this Peace by Sufferings, Blood and Death.
 " 'Tis He that arose again, and Thousands of Death
 " could not hold down the *Prince of Life.* And 'tis
 " He now *that rides upon the Heavens by his Name*
 " *JAH;* the Earth shook, the Heavens dropped at the
 " Presence of God, the God of Israel. The Chariots of
 " God, our IMMANUEL, are twenty Thousand, even
 " Thousands of Angels, The Lord God is among them,
 " as in Sinai in the holy Place. For thou hast ascended
 " on High, thou hast led Captivity captive, thou hast
 " received Gifts for Men (a). It is He, who, by a Pull
 " of his omnipotent Grace, draws the most backward
 " and rebellious Sinner unto himself. O Hero, O most
 " mighty Captain of our Salvation, gird thy Sword
 " upon thy Thigh, and in Glory, Majesty and State,
 " ride prosperously (b), subduing Thousands and Ten
 " thousands of Souls unto thee in the Day of thy Power."

" When the Hellish Antipathy of our Nature is over-
 " come, and the Heart is enclined to Thee, is it not
 " Thou thy self that hath done this? And in it thou
 " hast taken to thee thy great Power. When thou
 " turns a Clod of Earth into a heavenly Nature, and
 " raises the Soul that was wrapt in the Mud of Earth,
 " and sunk in Flesh, to a heavenly Elevation; Doth
 " not this shew thee to be wonderful in Counsel, and
 " excellent in working? When thou preserves the small
 " Spark of Grace in the Soul, notwithstanding of the
 " many Quench-coals from the Devil, the World and

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(a) Psal. lxxviii. (b) Psal. xlv.

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" the Flesh; O *but the right Hand of our Lord doth*
" *valiantly, the right Hand of our Lord doth valiantly,*
" *Higgaion, Selah !* When thou, O Lord, bears up a
" poor feeble sinking Soul under a thousand Pressures
" from Guilt, the Fear of Wrath, and Extremity of
" Troubles, and Continuance under them, and still
" keeps it staying itself only on thy self; certainly 'tis
" the Power of God that effects this; 'tis the Work of
" our Lord this, and 'tis *marvellous in our Eyes. Re-*
" *joice ye Heavens and Earth, and all Things therein,*
" *and let the Multitude of the Isles be glad, for the Lord*
" *God omnipotent reigneth."*

" O Son of the living God, thou art *matchless* and
" *marrowless* in all thy Excellencies! Thou art *the*
" *Form of God (a),* and who then can be thine Equal?
" What Comparison can there be between finite and
" infinite? Angels and Archangels, hold your Tongue
" of all your Excellencies, in Comparison of him, and
" cover your Faces, as ashamed of your Deformity
" comparative to his glorious Beauty. Glorified Saints
" cast down your Crowns at his Feet, as holding your
" All of him. Ten thousand Worlds, own ye are as
" nothing, and less than nothing and Vanity before
" him. And Sinners, for black Shame, mention not
" your Lusts and Idols in the same Day with him."

" *Perfect Excellency is in him! In the Person of our*
" *IMMANUEL,* God is fully to be contemplate in all the
" Beauties of his Holiness, in all the Smiles of his
" Grace, in all the pleasing Aspects of his Love, and
" in all the Resplendency of his Glory. *Pure Excel-*
" *lency is in thee! Thou, O Lord, art Thousands of*
" *Beauties, Heaps of Excellencies; and Treasures of*
" *Loveliness and Love; thou art purely so. The An-*
" *gels have their Folly, and the Heavens their compa-*
" *rative Impurity in thy Sight, but Thou art Light it-*
" *self, Thou art Beauty itself, and Perfection itself.*
" *There is nothing in thee, but what is so. Thy Per-*
" *son, thy Gifts, thy Promises, thy Precepts, thy*
" *Crown, thy very Cross is the Perfection of Beauty!*
" *When*

(a) Philip. ii. 6.

" When seen *lifted up on the Cross*, thou art enough to
 " draw all Men unto thee (a). O 'tis enough to draw
 " Earth unto Heaven, and to subdue a whole World
 " to thy Grace and Government! What Hearts are
 " ours! What but Rocks and Stones, or worse, that
 " are not drawn more powerfully to thee with such
 " a Cord of thy Love, and are not ravished into an
 " eternal Transport with thy God-like Countenance!
 " I would fain essay to commend Thee, O lovely
 " and loving Redeemer; but what can I say worthy
 " of Thee, or suitable to thy superexcellent Perfections?
 " I may say, **Thou art white and ruddy**, white in thy
 " Divine Nature, which is the Brightness of thy Fa-
 " ther's Person; and red in thy Humanity, which was
 " of the first *Adam* that was made of red Earth: White
 " in thine own immaculate Purity and Innocency, but
 " red in the Imputation of our Scarlet Crimson Sins:
 " White in thy Goodness and free Grace to humble
 " Sinners, but red and bloody to thy incorrigible En-
 " mies. I may say, Thou art the Chosen, the Chief,
 " the Standard-Bearer among Thousands and Myriads.
 " I may tell that thy Face is like the Face of the Son
 " of God; that thou hast a majestick Head, enriched
 " with Light, and crowned with Glory; that the
 " Words of thy Mouth pass in Sweetness Honey dis-
 " stilling from the Honey-comb; that thy Voice is
 " enough to wrap the Creature into eternal Ravish-
 " ment; that one Drop of thy Myrrhe is sufficient to
 " sweeten Thousands of Oceans, and one Glance of
 " thine Eyes to strike Heaven into endless Raptures.
 " But all these Images are too weak and faint to re-
 " present what thou art: And so all and the ut-
 " most I can say of Thee, is to join with all thy
 " Church and People, in saying, *Thou art altogether*
 " *lovely* (b)." And whatever Way I view Thee, my
 " dearest Redeemer, I cannot but find such incomparable
 " Sweetness, and such a Joy diffused into my Heart, as
 " transports my Soul into an incorrupt, unrivaled, rap-
 " turous Love: And I grudge that such a Heart should
 " have

(a) John xii. 32. (b) Cant. v. 6.

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have a Being in me, that has so little Love to the precious Redeemer, or so little to answer his immense and infinite Love to me. Hence,

XXXIII. *The warm and devout Soul falls down and prostrates itself before the Lord in profound Humility, and the pleasing Adoration of free Grace.*

Whence is this that the God of Heaven, the Lord of Life, should shew so much Love to such a vile Worm, as I am! O wonderful! that he should set his Love on nothing, on less, yea worse than nothing and Vanity! O who could have lookt for such a Thing as this! Oh! I'll humbly adore thee, saith the devout Soul! I'll ly at thy Feet! I acknowledge *I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof* (a). I am a Dog; and a Crumb from the Master's Table is more than I deserve: Yea, 'tis of the Lord's Mercy I am not consumed (b). *What's thy Servant, O Lord, a dead Dog, that thou shouldst shew him so much Kindness?*

But that the Lord, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth, should be at so much Pains, and so great Cost to rescue me, such a sinful and ungrateful Wretch as I am, from Hell and Death; and raise me up to Heaven's Happiness: O! this fills my Soul with Divine Astonishment! This dazzles my very Apprehension, confounds my Thoughts, and outreaches even my Wonder itself! O the unsearchable Depth of the Riches of the Wisdom, and of the Love of God, manifested in our Redeemer! Certainly the Violation of such Grace and of such Goodness, by Contempt and Ingratitude, is the most fearful Wickedness in the World. O I never appeared so vile in mine own Eyes, as now that I find, I have been insensible of, and have despised such immense Goodness, and such inexpressible Love! And alas! that I am so unaffected at present, and do so little adore free Grace, and rich Grace! O Sovereign Grace! O irresistible Grace! What canst thou not do? What Difficulties are there, either from Man's Ignorance and Perverse-

(a) Matth. viii. 8. (b) Lam. iii. 22.

Perverseness, or from Satan's strong Power and subtle Policy, which the Grace of God manifested in the Redeemer cannot surmount ?

O Divine Grace, thou can take an Advantage from our Sinfulness and Miseries to bring the more Glory to God, and the greater Exaltation and Honour to Man. What Hearts are so hard, which thou canst not break ? Or so dead, which thou canst not enliven ? or so backward to God and Goodness, which thou canst not convert ?

And has the Power and Glory of free Grace been manifested to me ; to such vile Dust, and such an ungrateful Worm as I am, that deserved nothing but Hell and Destruction for ever ? O I am left to wonder, and to stand amazed at the Height and Depth of Divine Love ! And I would like to be drawn off from my self, and to be ravished eternally with gazing on Christ's transporting Excellencies, and the fixed Contemplation of his Love and Grace ! O the free and superabundant Grace of our Glorious Redeemer !

XXXIV. *The Soul that has tasted that the Lord is gracious, cannot rest in a State of Distance from him.*

Have I not often found, says the Man, to my very sad Experience, that no sooner was my Heart estranged from Christ by Vanity or Worldliness of Mind, by Pride, or any sinful Affection, but immediately there was a Deadness in my Soul ; a Restraint upon its Activity, and a Damp upon its Joy ? I did indeed so far impose upon my self, as to believe there were Pleasures that could satisfy without the Favour of God and the Light of his Countenance, and without a right State and Posture of Soul towards the Redeemer, and without the secret, solid Satisfaction, which results from a spiritual and heavenly Temper of Mind. But O how slight and superficial were the Delights I found, in Comparison of what I lost ! They could never yield me any inward Content, nor afford me any settled Peace. There was still something wanting, and something absolutely needful to found an intimate, solid and satisfy-

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ing Joy; without which my Laughter was but like the Crackling of Thorns under a Pot, or like the Sneering of Fools. And how often, and how sadly has this happened in my Life? What by entangling worldly Cares; what by inveigling worldly Pleasures; and what by the vitiated Appetite of mine own corrupt Heart; how often have I suffered my spiritual Delights to fade, and lost the Sense of God, and the Savour of heavenly Things upon my Spirit! O where am I, *saith the exercised Soul*, and where can I find my self in such a Condition? Do not I find my Soul all this Time not right placed, but off its Foundation and Centre? And do I not find it full of Indetermination, restless Instability, and endless Excursions? For when a Man turns his Back upon God and Christ and Heaven, what has he stable to fix upon? And what can he do but run from Creature to Creature with a Pursuit as vain and vexatious, as they themselves are full of Vanity and Vexation of Spirit? O there can be nothing but Darkness in my Soul, when at a Distance from the Fountain of Light: And there can be nothing but Deadness in my Spirit, when at a Distance from the Fountain of Life: And what Comfort can there be in my Heart, while the Comforter, *which should refresh my Soul, is far from me (a)*? Can I be at ease, while in such a dark, dead and sad Condition? Can I be at rest, when *my Feet are almost gone, and my Steps well nigh slipt (b)*? Can I rest, when I have lost my Ground; and my Soul is turned from God its only Centre and Rest? O! no, no. O that it were otherwise with me! O! *that it were with me as in Months past, as in the Days when God preserved me, when his Candle shined upon my Head, and when by his Light I walked through Darkness; when the Almighty was yet with me (c); and the Secret of God was upon my Tabernacle: When I put on Righteousness and it cloathed me, and my Judgment was as a Rob and Diadem (d).*

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XXXV. The

(a) Lam. i. 16. (b) Psal. l. xiii. 2. (c) Job xxix. 2, 3 4.
(d) Job xxi. 14.

XXXV. *The Believer, when sensible of his Distance and Estrangement from God, seeks to return unto him by Repentance and Weeping.*

O! *says the Soul*, lamenting after the Lord, was there ever another followed with so many Mercies, who hath been so unthankful? Or exercised with so many Crosses, who hath been so unhumble? Or hath any so often engaged unto God, who hath been so unsteadfast in his Covenant? Or hath any had so great Experience of the Grace and Mercy of God, who hath so little Savour and Relish of it? Or doth any that professes such a near Relation to God and Heaven, discover so little of a Spirit answerable to such a Dignity, or suitable to such a high Expectation? Oh! while I think on these Things, *My Soul is troubled within me; being these, and such like, Iniquities separate between God and my Soul* (a); breed a Distance and Strangeness between God and my Heart, and break up the sweet Interviews, and delightful Intercourse my Soul hath had with God manifested in our Emmanuel. What shall I do in this Case? I'll *lie in the Dust* and afflict my Soul for Sin: I'll *return unto my God again with Weeping and Supplication*: I'll *put away Iniquity far from my Tabernacle* (b), *that I may yet lift up my Face to him without Spot and without Fear* (c). And O! now I *abhorre my self in Dust and Ashes* (d)! And wherein I have done Iniquity, through Grace I'll do so no more: *What have I to do any more with Idols* (e)? I'll *keep my self from mine Iniquity* (f). And O to be freed of all my Trespases!

XXXVI. *Yet because no Tears can wipe out the Stain and Guilt of Sin, the gracious Soul makes a new Application of Christ's Blood for renewed Pardon and Grace.*

Doth Sin, *says the exercised Penitent*, clog my Soul in its Flights unto God? Hath it bred a Strangeness and

Shyness

(a) Isa. lix. 2. (b) Job xxii. 23. (c) Job xi. 15. (d) Job xlii. 6. (e) Hos. xiv. 8. (f) Psal. xviii. 23.

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Shyness betwixt God and my Heart? Hath it hindred that spiritual Composeness, or Sabbath of Spirit I have had in God? Hath Sin polluted and debased my Soul, by coming in betwixt it and God, in whose Presence I might have such Light, such Life and such Comfort? O sinful Sin! *Sin is a Burden too heavy for me to bear (a).* O to be eased of this Burden, and cleansed from this Pollution! Whom should I go to for this End? I'll go to him, whose Love can cover a Multitude of Sins, and *whose Blood can cleanse from Sins (b).* I'll take hold of him, *who is set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past (c).* I'll accept of him, who hath received a Commission from his Father, *to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty unto the Captives, and the opening of the Prison to them that are bound (d).* And O blessed is he *that cometh in the Name of the Lord to save us (e).* I lay hold on him, and apply his Blood for renewed Pardon and renewed Comfort.

XXXVII. *Where there is a true Application of Christ for Pardon and Grace, or a true Desire of Communion with God, the Man will set himself to live very humbly, tenderly and holily before the Lord.*

'Tis a Contradiction to think of getting the Pardon of Sin, without getting the Pollution of it cleansed away, and the Power of it broken: There being an inseparable Connexion between Justification and Sanctification. Yea, the Power and Pollution of Sin is the greatest Punishment of Sin: It was so to Adam, and 'tis so to his Posterity. 'Tis the spiritual Death threatened, comprehensive of all other Evils: And 'tis so even from the Nature of the Thing. Were there no other Stroke of Vengeance upon a Sinner. *His own Wickedness would correct him, and his Backslidings reprove him.* And as 'tis a Thing utterly inconsistent in itself, so 'tis a

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(a) Psal. xxxviii. 4. (b) 1 John i. 7. (c) Rom. iii. 25.
(d) Isa. lx. 1. (e) Psal. cxviii. 26.

horrible affronting of God to his Face ; to hope for Pardon, and at the same Time maintain an Affection to Sin, and have no Mind to part with it. What is the Meaning of this, but a hoping that God will give Liberty to dishonour his Name, and trample on his Laws? And is this meet to be said unto God? O horrid, and impious Absurdity!

Well then, *says the exercised Soul*, if I sincerely aim at Pardon, Acceptance and Communion with God, I'll sincerely aim to be holy also; for God is holy, and *without Holiness no Man shall see the Face of God* (a). *What Communion can there be between Light and Darkness* (b); between a holy God and unholy Souls? *Is he a God that can take Pleasure in Wickedness, or can Evil dwell with him?* O! no, no. Sooner shall Heaven and Earth, yea Heaven and Hell blend together, than that God shall ever be a Lover of Sin.

And I must be *spiritual and heavenly*; for if Earth or any Thing on Earth be the *Main* of my Hope, and *Chief* of my Delight, how can I correspond to the Relation I profess to have unto God? Or how would he think it consistent with his Honour, to own an Earth-worm, as one of his People? I must then, through Divine Grace, discover a certain Excellency of Spirit by looking Heaven-ward, and looking Heaven-like; in respect of which *God may not be ashamed to be called my God*. And for this End, I'll hate my Sins forever, and *I'll walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living* (c). I'll walk tenderly, holily, purely and awfully, as one that is ay before the Lord, and never desires to be out of his Sight, while I live. Hence,

XXXVIII. *The gracious Soul becomes very solicitous and watchful against all Temptations to sin.*

O, *says the Man*, I must be very intent and careful in the great Matters between God and my Soul: I must not wait till Sin appear in its vilest Hue, but I will

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(a) Heb. xii. 14. (b) 2 Cor. x. 14. (c) Psal. cxvi. 9.

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strive against, and check the first Motions of Sin, and abstain from every Appearance of Evil (a): And look also not only to the Bulk of my Duties, but also to the Manner of performing them. And O, I am resolved, through Grace, to stop my Heart, and put a Restraint upon it, whenever it begins to wander from God. I know I can neither get nor keep Communion with God, without keeping the Heart close and near to him, and without a narrow Watch over the loose and unsettled Thoughts that are ready to stray from God, and fall to the Creature again, and without exact and *circumspect walking* (b): And I resolve upon all this! And O! might I attain to it! But,

XXXIX. *Because there is no trusting of the Heart, or any of its Resolves, the gracious Soul sees a daily Need of Christ, and of immediate Dependence on his Grace.*

I know, says the Believer, that 'tis not in me, or in Man to direct his Heart, or to stand to his own Resolves; but Christ he shall be the Guide of my Youth, and the Staff of mine old Age: And I'll go through this Wilderness leaning upon my Beloved (c); not in Pretence and Presumption, as some do, but by a real and faithful Dependency. And not only as a Branch on the Wall for Support, but as a Branch on the Root for Life and Sap (d); for without him I can do nothing: As without his Merit I can do nothing for Justification, so without his Spirit I can do nothing in Sanctification, Direction, or Consolation (e); The Life then I live shall be by Faith in the Son of God (f). Am I in Darknels, and see no Light? I'll trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay my self upon my God (g). Want I Liveliness of Frame? I'll go to him who came into the World that we might have Life, and have it more abundantly (h). Is there nothing but Fainting and Weakness in

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(a) 1 Thess. v. 22. (b) Eph. v. 15. (c) Cant. viii. 5. (d) John xv. 4. (e) John xv. 5. (f) Gal. ii. 20. (g) Isa. l. 10. (h) John x. 10.

my Soul ? I'll lean on him *who giveth Power to him that fainteth, and who, to him that hath no Might, increaseth Strength* (a). Am I in an Hour of Temptation from Sin, or Satan, or the World ? I know his *Grace is sufficient* (b), and I fly to the same. And in every Case I'll depend on my blessed Redeemer, and not think of moving one Step Heaven-wards without his Grace and Strength.

XL. *The gracious Soul being pressed by its own Necessities in the Sense of an absent God, riseth to a great Pitch of humble and earnest Importunity for his Presence.*

Rather, *saith the warm and devout Soul*, let me suffer any Want than the Want of Communion with God. Thy Presence, O Lord, can make up the Want of worldly Riches, Honours, &c. but all the Creation cannot fill the Room, or make up the Loss of God to a Soul. How vain and useless is my Life without an Interest in God, and Intercourse with him ? Without this I can be in no State to serve him aright : For how vain a Thing will it be, to be tugging at the Oar of unassisted Duties ? What Good can I either do or get in Ordinances, unless the Lord be with me in them ? And without this I can be in no Condition to honour God. If the Lord shew himself, the smallest Graces will shew themselves excellently and well : But if God is gone from the Soul, the very Light of that Soul is put out ; and there is nothing but a *Chaos* of Darknets, Impurity and Horror in it. Yea, *saith the sensible and earnest Soul*, without the Presence of God, and daily Influence from his Spirit, I cannot manage even the Stock of habitual Grace. The infused Habits of Grace are God's great Work ; but they would remain Habits still, or rather decay, without constant Divine Communications. And have not I many a Temptation to overcome, many a Cross to bear, and many a Flood to pass ?

(a) Isa. xl. 29. (b) 2 Cor. xii. 9.

pass? And how could I pass fairly through all these Difficulties, unless the Lord be with me?

Hence the Soul being pressed by its own Exigencies, and stirred up by Love, it cries mightily unto God for his Presence, saying, *O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee: My Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land where no Water is: To see thy Power and thy Glory, so as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary (a)! O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even unto his Seat (b)! How gladly will I submit to all Conditions of Reconciliation and Restoration unto the Presence of God! Though the Lord should require much, and impose much, yet if he will come to me, and cause me to approach unto him, I am content with all, and glad of all: For the Desires of my Soul are towards thee, O Lord, and the Remembrance of thy Name (c). My Heart breaketh for the longing it hath towards thee (d). My Soul followeth hard after thee O Lord (e). O thou that dwellest among the Cherubims shine forth (f)!*

XLI. *It cannot be otherwise, but that the warm Believer shall be very pressing in this Business, since he finds that Communion with God, thro' Christ, is such a very real and satisfying Thing.*

That there is a real Communication from God upon the Soul, and a real Impression correspondent to that Communication, is evident from the spiritual Sense and Experience of a gracious Heart.

What is it, *saieth the Believer*, but a *Divine Light* shining in my Heart, that can give me such a clear and extensive View of God, of Christ and Heaven, in Comparison of what I had before; whereby I have, not a Knowledge only of Terms, Propositions, and Arguments about heavenly Things, as Hypocrites may have, but a *real* Perception of the Things themselves; not a Knowledge by Report and Hearsay, like a blind Man's under-

(a) Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2. (b) Job xxiii. 3. (c) Isa. xvi. 8. (d) Psal. cxix. 20. (e) Psal. lxxiii. 8. (f) Psal. lxxx. 1.

understanding the Definition of Colours, but an experimental Savour of spiritual Blessings, and their agreeable Sweetness and Suitableness to my Soul.

And what but the *Divine Presence* can draw the Likeness and Lineaments of Christ on my Soul; give such a holy Impression, and leave such a Stamp of God upon my Heart, as suffers it not to forget him?

And what also but a *Divine Power* can give such Life and Spirit to the Soul, that was dead as a Stone before: So that the Heart which was harder than a Rock, and more stupid than Earth, becomes melted like Wax, and made not only alive, but very lively in holy Duties?

Again, what but a secret *Influence* and *Outletting* from God, can infuse such Joy into my Heart, when there is no visible Cause for it: *So that tho' the Fig-tree should not blossom, nor Fruit be in the Vine, and the Labour of the Olive should fail, and the Flocks be cut off from the Fold, and the Herds from the Stall; yet I can rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my Salvation (a).*

What's the Tendency and Issue of all these Divine Influences upon my Soul? Do they not make my Soul more holy, humble, spiritual and heavenly? and fashion it into a nearer Conformity unto God; and cause my Heart acquiesce in him, as my only *chief Good* and *supreme Happiness*? And can this be owing to any mechanical Operation of Nature? Can *Nature* rectify and amend Nature? Or rather, can Nature outdo Nature? Can Nature not only elevate Nature above its natural Centre and Bias, but even change and wholly alter it, and give a spiritual Modification to all its Powers, Properties, Vertues and Actions? Can it turn a Lump of Flesh into a spiritual Nature? or a Clod of Earth into a heavenly Nature? Sooner shall the ponderous Mountains start from their Centre, and burst up from their Foundations, and, like Balls of Light, flee unto the higher Orbs and Regions of Light, than that any natural Cause shall be productive of such supernatural Effects.

Or is it mere Fancy that works such Wonders, and gives such a happy Turn unto the Souls of Men; when

(a) Hab. iii. 17, 18.

'tis not me alone, *saieth the Believer*, or when 'tis not one or two only, in one Age, or in one Corner of the World, but Hundreds and Thousands of Men and Women, of all Capacities, in all Ages, and in every Place where the Gospel is preached, that have the sure and sweet Experience of these Divine, these Soul-transforming, these God-conforming Operations on their Spirits? And perhaps even where the Gospel is not, or but corruptly preached, there may be some superficial Tastes of such supernatural Powers.

Can it be *Fancy*, when the Persons that are most grave and composed, most prudent and sagacious, most inquisitive and discerning, and who have taken most Leisure to know the true State of their Souls, and to observe what passes in their Mind, do not only attest to and avouch their Nearness to God, and the Divine Communications and Manifestations made to their Souls, but also venture their All in Time and Eternity upon it?

Yea what's the Life and Spirit, and main Design of all true Religion, but a holy and heavenly Intercourse of the Soul with God? Or a forming the Spirit suitably to the moral Perfections of God, in order to have Communion with him as our chief Happiness? Can I once imagine, that Religion consists only or *mainly* in social Virtues? If so, since these social Duties have Respect mainly to the Preservation and Comfort of the animal Life, there could be no higher View in such a Religion, than how one, by the most proper Methods, might serve the Flesh: For 'tis certain a Religion cannot be more excellent than the End for which it was instituted. And all this would be a Supposition so gross and horrid, as that it were impossible to aggravate it by grosser Absurdities than the Supposition itself.

XLII. *Yet often there is so much Darknesh mixed with the Believer's Light, as that his Light is neither clear nor dark, hence he is often in sad Suspence whether he is a Child of Darknesh, or a Child of Light.*

The least Thing in true Grace, let it be supposed ever so weak, is, that the spiritual Part is predominant, and gets

gets the better in the Conflict with Sin and Satan: At least habitually it must be so; and every particular Grace must have the Ascendent over its contrary. But this Superiority of the Spirit to the Flesh may be in such a low Degree as not to be easily perceived. The Person, it may be, finds much Darkness, Misperuasion and Hesitancy in his Mind as to spiritual Things, and yet he sees as much in them as makes him prefer them to a thousand Worlds. His Trust and Confidence in a Redeemer may be very low and weak; and yet he hath more Satisfaction from what he promises to himself from God Christ and Heaven, than from any or from all his best Friends or his best Enjoyments on Earth. He is often complaining of his Impatiencè and Unsubmissiveness to the Will of God; and yet he would not for a World want a God to rule it, and would rather that God should dispose of him and all his Concerns, than that he himself should have the carving out his own Fortune. He sadly complains of the Coldness of his Love to Christ; and yet offer him an eternal Confluence of all worldly Comforts on the one Hand, and the eternal Enjoyment of Jehovah and the Lamb on the other, he thinks there is no Comparison between them; and readily saith with the Psalmist, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, O Lord, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee* (a). He bemoans that the Work of Mortification of Sin in him is not sufficient, when the Reason of it may be, that he cannot be satisfied with any Degree of Mortification but what extirpates Sin Root and Branch. He is sore molested with the Lusts both of his Flesh and of his Mind; but he is busy by Prayer and Fasting and Watching to get a full Victory, and is willing to submit to any Methods, how costly or how rough soever they may appear to Flesh and Blood, that God may take, for the purging away of his Sin. He is much troubled with the Risings and Workings of Pride; but he cannot be satisfied, nor have inward Quiet of Mind, but in so far as he is made humble and lowly in his Mind, and made to stoop and bow willingly to the Divine Sovereignty and

(a) Psal. lxxiii. 25.

and Will. Selfishness creeps in upon him; but he is never so well pleased, as when he can brook to be despised and go out of himself for the Glory of God. His Fancy perhaps is tickled and gratified with the Thoughts of worldly Prosperity and Honour; but this he soon finds to be but a slight Joy, and as the crackling of Thorns under a Pot, and therefore cannot have inward settled Contentment but in God and Conformity to him. The Earth is much in his Mind; but make him sure of Heaven, sure of reaching the perfect Communion with God there is in Heaven, he'll willingly leave this Earth at a Call. He wants, it may be, melting, passionate Joys in spiritual Things, while yet there may be such an inward Calm and sedate Admiration of the glorious Things of Christ's Purchase, as pierces into the very Centre of his Soul.

But then, on the other Hand, what real Reason hath he to be sadly distressed in his Spirit, in finding how weak and how wanting he is in Grace. How dark and dim, says he, is my Understanding in the Things of God, and how weak is my Persuasion of them? How else would I find it such a hard Thing to believe the Promises, unless I see some visible Way of Performance? And how could I suffer myself to be so entangled in worldly Cares, or so inveigled with worldly Pleasures, if my Assent to the great Things of the Gospel were such as it should be? How could all this happen, if there was not some great Defect in my Persuasion, either of the Reality, or of the Excellency, or of the Suitableness of Things unseen and eternal? While I think on this, my Soul is troubled. I want much of the Light of the Glory of the Lord shining on the Face of Immanuel to shine on my Tabernacle. And doth not the Weakness of my Trust and Confidence in Jesus Christ my Lord betray me many a Time into jealous Thoughts of God, after all the Promises on his Part, and some sweet Experiences on mine? Where is there that hearty and full Recumbency of Soul on the Lord my Righteousness, as may be a pleasant Rest and Settlement to my Heart, that is many a Time tossed to-and fro and afflicted

ted and not comforted. I am also full of sad Regret, says he, that my Love to the lovely and loving Redeemer is so far from that Degree and Measure as it ought to be. How could there be so often such a Strangeness on my Heart, and such Unlistiness in my Spirit with respect to spiritual Things; or such Weariness of Mind and Distraction of Thought in Duty, if there was not much Coldness in my Love? Or how could the World get so near my Heart, or why would I be so seldom in Divine Meditation? Why would I not every Day, and every Hour of the Day, be counting that all Things are but Loss and Dung in Comparison of Christ, if there were not sad Decays and Intermissions of my Love to the blessed Redeemer?

Besides all this, indwelling Corruption being so urgent and importunate, that tho' resisted and subdued in a good Measure, yet, what by the Vanity of our Minds, or the Carnality of our Affections, or the Folly of our Imaginations, it returns, renews its Assaults and presses hard upon the Soul again; so that for as many Inclinations there are to Duties, there are as many Counter-tendencies to Sin; and as many Motions as there are from the Spirit of God in the Heart, there are as many contrary Injections from Sin. All this makes the Case of the Believer many a Time so perplexed, that he can hardly discern whether it be Night or Day in his Soul.

And what further intangles the Soul as to a clear taking up of its State, is the Deceitfulness of the Heart and its unsearchable Depths. 'Tis even hard to know its general Disposition, whether it be sincere or corrupt; but to know all its secret Turnings, Windings and Traverses is next to being impossible. O how hard is it to search into the Bottom of the Heart, and find out the secret Springs of its Motion! Besides, there is a corrupt Partiality in our Hearts to think that our Good is more than it is, and to think that our Evil is less than it is. All this puts even the true Believer many a Time into a Fear *lest a Promise being left of his entering into Rest, he should seem to come short of it* (a). Hence the gracious Soul

after

(a) Heb. iv. 1.

after he hath even been as upon the Mount with God, is brought down again many a Time to examine whether the very Foundations of Religion be well laid in his Soul.

XLIII. *The Believer, being sensible of the many lamentable Defects and Changes of his spiritual Condition, which cost him the Labour of returning by the very Steps he hath lost, becomes very importunate with God for his strengthening and establishing Grace.*

O, *saith the exercised Soul*, when I thought I was upon my Watch-tower, guarding my Thoughts and Affections, and even my very Senses, these Avenues of the Soul; yet how often has the deceitful Heart given me the Slip! O give my Spirit a more settled Bent to Heaven and heavenly Things. When I thought my Spirit was bending to my God, the Original of all Blessedness, yet how soon did it turn aside like a deceitful Bow! O for a more steady Direction of Heart upwards and Heavenwards!

Sometimes I thought I had now Strength, not only to *walk*, but to *run in the Ways of God's Commandments* (a), yet O how soon hath my Soul fainted! Lord help me. Lord *give Power unto the Faint, and to him that hath no Might increase Strength* (b).

When I imagined I was got up unto a sublime and heavenly Frame, and that *my Mountain was strong, and it should never be moved* (c); yet how soon were the Wings of my Soul clipped! and how soon was I as a Bird entangled in Snares, that either falls down, or is pulled down to Earth again! O *let the Snares be broken, whilst I withal escape* (d). *Cause me mount up as on Eagles Wings, run and not be weary, and walk and not be faint* (e).

I know 'tis not a Fit of Affection, nor a Pang of Devotion that will reach the Work; but 'tis a strong ha-

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bitual

(a) Isa. xl. 31. (b) Isa. xl. 29. (c) Psal. xxx. 6. (d) Psal. cxxiv. 7. (e) Isa. xl. 31.

bitual Intendment towards God and Christ, and a vigorous, steady Use of all the Means that lead nearer and nearer unto him. *Unite my Heart, O Lord, to fear thy Name continually (a)*; and fix my wandering Mind. *Lord strengthen me with Strength in my Soul (b)*; and keep it for ever upon the Imagination of the Thoughts of my Heart to serve thee (c).

'Tis not moving of the Lips, nor bending of the Knee that can carry a Soul to Heaven; but 'tis a going from Strength to Strength: And how can such a feeble and short-winded Sinner travel daily such a deep Ascent without thy strengthning Grace! *O strengthen what remains in me, and which is ready to die (d), strengthen with all Might in the Inner-man (e).*

I am sensible that many will seek to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven which shall not be able (f) because they seek it but faintly, and put not on Strength in their Endeavours to attain it. O give such Strength and Might in the Inner-man, that the whole Bent of my Soul may be employed in following hard after thee, my God, and in *striving to enter in at the strait Gate (g)*, and may be strong enough to carry me on in my Travel Heaven-ward, with such Liveliness and Vigour as breaks through all the Rubs and Intanglements in my Way, from Sin, Satan, or the World.

'Tis not a transient Light glancing on the Head, or making a Stir only in the lower sensitive Powers, that I am praying for; but for an Impression of Divine Things, so deep as pierces through my Mind into the very Centre of my Heart, and operates on all the Powers and Affections of my Soul with such strong Influence, as to keep them direct towards God Christ and Heaven. Grant me this, O Lord, I beseech thee. *I pray God may sanctify me wholly and throughout in Soul, Spirit and Body (h).*

'Tis not some good Wishes and Purposes, or some general Thoughts of the Goodness of God and the Love of

(a) Psal. lxxxvi. 11. (b) Psal. cxxxviii. 3. (c) 1 Chron. xxix. 18. (d) Rev. iii. 3. (e) Eph. iii. 16. (f) Luke xiii. 14. (g) Luke xiii. 24. (h) 1 Thess. v. 23.

of a Saviour that will either serve my Turn or answer my Mind. I would have a vital Savour of the Things of God diffused through my Heart, and diffusing itself through all my Thoughts, Affections, and Actions. I would have Heaven so interwoven in the very Frame and Constitution of my Soul, as that every Thing I do may have a Tincture of Holiness and an Air of Heaven upon it.

'Tis not a Taste only of the good Word of God, and a Flash of Joy upon it that shall satisfy me; but I would fain have an equal Respect to all God's Commandments, an universal Work of the Spirit upon the whole Man, Soul and Body, and a Supply made to every Joint: For there is not a Grace pertaining to the Christian Integrity but I would have, and in the Measure and Degree that is attainable. Lord Jesus, furnish me with Supplies of the Spirit from *thy unmeasurable Fulness* (a).

O blessed Lord, 'tis an easy Thing for thee to do so. Thou canst, with a secret Touch upon my Spirit, communicate Life, Strength and delightful Motion unto it in spiritual Things. Thou canst with thy uncontrollable Power incline my Heart, with the greatest Freedom and Willingness to follow thee wherever thou goes. Thou canst with the efficacious Sweetness of thy Grace make my Soul, *that ere ever it is aware, it shall be like the Chariots of Ammi-nadib* (b). And hast not thou said that thou wouldst do so? Hast not thou said and promised, that *thy People shall be made willing in the Day of thy Power* (c); that *thou wilt pour Water on him that is thirsty, and Floods upon dry Ground* (d); that *the Righteous shall flourish like the Palm-tree, that he shall grow like a Cedar of Lebanon, and shall bring forth Fruits in old Age, and be fat and flourishing in the House of God* (e); that thou wouldst be as *the Dew to Israel, that he may grow as the Lily, and cast forth his Roots as Lebanon* (f); that *thy Grace shall be sufficient for us* (g); that having all Sufficiency in all Things, *we may abound*

H 2

to

(a) Philip. i. 19. John iii. 34. (b) Cant. vi. 12. (c) Psal. cx. 3. (d) Isa. xlv. 3. (e) Psal. xcii. 13, 15. (f) Hos. xiv. 5. (g) 2 Cor. xii. 9.

to every good Work (a); That every Branch in Christ shall bring forth much Fruit (b). And now, Lord, be it unto thy Servant according to thy Word.

I am sensible, O Lord, that without an abiding Root and Principle of Grace, any Thing done in Religion is but occasional, accidental and easily intermitted. I would have a strong Impre's of thy Spirit upon my Heart, to implant such a strong and prevailing Habit of Grace, as may cause a more clear and extensive Sight of Things unseen and eternal, a more predominant Respect to thy Glory, a deeper Set of Humility and Self-denial, a more lively and fixed Sense of God, a more awful and reverential, as well as a sweet and loving Deference to the Majesty of Heaven, and may cast my Soul into a more penitent, lively, tender and heavenly Mould. *Grant, I beseech thee, according to the Riches of thy Glory, to strengthen me with Might by thy Spirit in the Inner-man, that Christ may dwell in my Heart by Faith, and that being grounded and rooted in Love, I may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the Breadth and Length and Depth and Height, and to know the Love of Christ that passeth Knowledge, and I may be filled with all the Fulness of God (c).*

I am further sensible that no created Grace can preserve itself, nor act itself, nor increase itself, without new breathing and Influence upon it from the Spirit of Christ: That, without this, Faith would soon fail, Hope would perish, and Love would decay, and all the Habits and Principles of Grace would wither and die. I pray therefore, *Lord quicken me in thy Way (d).* Awake O North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden, that the Spices thereof may flow out (e). Awaken my Soul to the liveliest Thoughts of God and the devoutest Affections to him. O stir up my Soul and bend its utmost Vigour to serve thee, my God, with a lively Faith, ardent Love, flaming Zeal, and Heart-raising Hope. Blessed Redeemer, so present thyself to my Soul, and keep up in it such a Sense of thy Love, as
suffers

(a) 2 Cor. ix. 8. (b) John xv. 2. (c) Eph. iii. 16, 17, 19.
(d) Psal. cxix. 37. (e) Cant. iv. 16.

suffers me never to forget thee, but excites me to be
ay bringing forth some Point to thy Honour, and some
Instance of Willingness and Activity for thy Glory.

'Tis not being now and then in a good Mood, by a
hasty Start of the Affections, that can or shall satisfy me;
but I would be holy, humble, and heavenly in the ge-
neral Temper of my Heart and Tenor of my Life. I
would fain fill up my Time with Duties, bring Godli-
ness with me into every Business of Life, and be in ac-
tual Fitness for Communion with God, and keep up In-
tercourse with him in his Providences, as well as his
Ordinances. Grant, Lord, that Holiness may be a new
Nature in me, making me prompt and ready for holy
Things, and holy Things easy and familiar to me.
Grant these holy Dispositions and Acts may be so pow-
erful, as to bear down all Oppositions and Temptations
to the contrary. Grant they may be still getting Ground,
and be drawing the Soul nearer and nearer to God, its
Rest. And grant such holy Thoughts and Affections
may be the most sweet and delectable Exercises of my
Mind. For

I would fain that my Affections to Things Divine were
lively and not dull: Yet so, as not to measure the Strength
of my Grace by the Flash or Height of my Affections,
but the Affections themselves by the Bottom whereon
they stand, as Self-denial, cleaving to the Promise, In-
graftment in Christ, and Settlement of the Soul upon
the Mediator. I would fain have my Affections ready
and at Hand to the Things above, and not far a seeking,
or needing a great deal of Do to call and gather them
in to wait on my Lord. I would fain they were more
pure and unmixed, and had less of the Creature in
them. I would fain have them stay'd in a Divine hea-
venly Frame, without turning back in the right Way,
or turning aside to the wrong. O that Holiness to the
Lord may be written in my Heart and Life, and that I
may be perfectly transformed into Christ's Image! O
that *my Paths may be as the Morning Light that shineth
more and more unto a perfect Day* (a). *Strengthen, O*

H 3

God,

(a) Prov. iv. 18.

God, what thou hast wrought for me (a); may thy Grace be sufficient for me (b): Make all Grace abound in me (c): May the God of all Grace, who is calling us to his eternal Glory by Christ Jesus make me perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle me (d). O for a Heart constantly fixed on God! One Thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may behold his Beauty (e), and fixedly contemplate the same. And O that his Glory and his infinitely amiable Countenance may be so displayed to me, as that I may count upon no Satisfaction, but what is to be had in God, and may never again turn off from him! And shall nothing of all this be attained in the Measure I would be at, till in Heaven I shall be made as a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and go no more out? Hence,

XLIV. *There is a longing and stretching of the Soul towards Heaven.*

'Tis no Wonder, next, that the Heaven-born Soul, which is so much delighted in God, and ravished with the Excellencies of the blessed Jesus, hath a very afflicting Sense of any Interruption of such rare and heavenly Enjoyments; and doth press hard for immediate Intuition, and unintermitting Fruition. Hence it rises higher and higher in its Desires and Pursuits, even as high as Heaven, the Seat of the Glory of the Lord, and the Place where his Beauty shines in its full Strength.

Is not, *says the Believer*, Heaven the Throne of God, where he shows forth all his Magnificence and Glory? And is not the King of Glory gone up to yonder Heavens? And what can satisfy me here on Earth? Not any Attainment of even Grace itself, can sate the boundless Appetites of my enlarged capacious Soul. O how small are the Glimmerings, and how dark are all the Discoveries I have of God and of Christ, while here away? Tho' they were never interrupted, they are but as Glass-representations; at least, but as Morning-dawnings in

Com-

(a) Psal. lxxviii. 28. (b) 2 Cor. xii. 9. (c) 2 Cor. ix. 8. (d) 1 Pet. v. 10. (e) Psal. xxvii. 4.

Comparison of Noon-day Visions. I see and feel indeed something that makes my Heart exult, and which yet I cannot express; but 'tis far from satisfying me, being both imperfect and inconstant: I would see the King in his Beauty: I would behold the full shine of his amiable, ravishing Excellencies. I would be altogether satiated with his uncreated Sweetness. O interposing Veil of Sense! How long will it be, e'er thou be drawn aside, that I may come into the immediate Presence of the infinitely glorious God, and behold my infinitely lovely Redeemer, bare-faced, without any Covert, and without any Veil! *Make haste, my Beloved, be thou as a young Roe, or a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether.* O take me up to Heaven, that I may behold thy Glory; or if that may not yet be, let Heaven come down into my Soul. I beseech thee to shew me thy Glory. The beholding of thy Glory, as 'tis the ultimate Product of all thy great Designs, so 'tis the final Issue of all my Desires. And even Heaven itself would be as a Lamp without Light, did not the Glory of the Lord lighten it, and if the Lamb were not the Light thereof. O that I were beholding the Face of God in Righteousness, and were satiated with his Likeness!

XIV. *When this comes to be the Temper and State of a Believers Soul, there is no persuading of him that such ardent Desires for Heaven and Glory can be vain Appetites.*

What Reason can there be to fear that such earnest Desires shall not be granted? Can I once imagine, or can it ever enter into my Mind to suspect, that he, who by opening of his Hand, satisfies the Desire of every Living, will not draw aside the Curtain, and give Satisfaction to these Desires which are directed to himself, and restless till they reach him? Shall all the Creatures Desires to any suitable Good be accomplished, these only excepted that are terminate on himself, and directed to his Glory? Does he not implant as well as satisfy

tisfy the natural and rational Appetite of every Creature? Or is *Holiness*, i. e. the habitual Inclination and Conformity of the Heart to God, the only Disposition that is not of God's planting? Or is it the only Appetite which he will frustrate, and has made in vain? O horrid! O impious once to be imagined! Who is he that believes there is a God, that can believe this? Would the infinitely perfect *Author* of our Beings implant in Man vain Desires, or groundless Expectations? Is it congruous to the Divine *Goodness* to impose on us? Or to his *Truth* to disappoint us? Or is his infinite *Wisdom* under a Necessity of making use of Deception, to secure the Honour of his Government and Laws? Or shall Man, who is the Master-piece of this inferior Creation, be the only Creature that is cheated with an imaginary and delusive Happiness? Is it rational to suppose that God, who made Man the Chief of all his visible Works, should endow him with such Powers and Faculties, as served only to fill him either with vain Hopes and restless Desires, or else with amazing Fears and vexing Grievs: And so have his *Reason* only to be a Cheat, and his *Conscience* to be a Torment; as they would be, if there were no Views of Heaven's Glory? But especially shall it ever be admitted, that the holy Soul, after all its Efforts for Heaven's Happiness by fervent Desires, Prayers, Cries, Wrestlings; and the Righteousness that fits and forms the Soul for the same; that yet the Grave should terminate all their Desires, and extinguish all their Hopes? Would not such a Thought extinguish all Religion, and banish the Fear of God from the Earth? A Supposition so wickedly inconsistent, that if God be God, and Man be Man, 'tis impossible ever to be true.

Doubtless then he will satisfy the longing Soul, and fulfil the Desires of those that fear him. Let their Desires be never so sublime, and never so extensive; let them rise as high as Heaven, and stretch unto the utmost Bounds of the Universe, his all-comprehensive Goodness can fully satisfy them. Yea,

XLVI. *The Believer, when in a good Plight, finds a Heaven already begun in his Soul.*

What is Heaven but a clear View of the glorious Lustre of the Divine Perfections, and a full uptaking and eternal Admiration of Redeeming Grace? What is Heaven but a full Sense, and a full Enjoyment of Divine Love: Love shining there in its perfect Vigour and Strength? And what's the Heaven of Heavens, but an eternal drinking in of uncreated Sweetness, and an entering into the Joy of our Lord: Where all Springs of Tears are dried up, and where all Fountains of pure, unmixed and satisfying Joys are broken up for ever and ever, to the eternal Rapture of glorified Saints?

And now, *saieth the gracious Soul*, when wrought up into a sublime and heavenly Temper, I have got a clearer Insight into the glorious and amiable Excellencies of God than ever before. I see him all Light, all Life, all Goodness, and all Happiness: And I see the Riches of most unsearchable Grace to poor Sinners, manifested in the Blessed Redeemer. And O but the Divine Glory is now rendred familiar, accessible, and enjoyable in our *Emmanuel*!

But that's not all, *saieth the warm and believing Soul*, I see he hath loved *me*, and given himself for me. I see a most astonishing Product of infinite Goodness, even the Gift of Christ to *me*, to such a vile Worm as *me*! And 'tis not a simple Theory of his Love I have, but I feel a pleasant Gust and Relish of it. I both see and taste that God is good and gracious. And O my Soul stays upon, and tastes with Sweetness these blessed Divine Operations and Communications it has seen, felt and tasted in God manifested in the Flesh! And this Satisfaction reaches into the very Heart of my Soul, and affects it with a Joy unspeakable and full of Glory: A Joy of the same Sort with that in Heaven; being clear, pure and unmixed, and proportionable to the whole Compass of the Soul, its Nature, Necessities and Duration. And this is the Joy that enables me some-
times

times not only to glory in God, but also to glory in Tribulations, and to bring all the World under me.

And O! is not this a Heaven already begun? Is not this a Heaven upon Earth? Yes, certainly: And,

XLVII. *The Heaven-breathing Soul is persuaded, that such a heavenly Disposition is a clear and certain Demonstration of the eternal Glory and Happiness that is reserved for Believers in Heaven.*

Do I attain, *saith the Believer*, to a clear Contemplation of the glorious Excellencies of God? What Reason can there be to fear, that *I shall not behold his Face in Righteousness* for ever? For if this be the very End of Man's Creation, and an End worthy of infinite Wisdom, that Man should contemplate the Glory of God: Can any imagine why it should not be his End for ever? Who that knows any Thing of God, can ever believe, that the infinitely wise Author of our Beings can ever be light in his Judgment, or desultory in his Views and Ends? And were there Place for such a gloomy Thought, that all the pleasant Contemplations, which the Soul hath of the amiable Perfections and Beauties of God, should by Death be buried in eternal Darkness, what a horrid Damp would this cast upon the Soul? And how effectually would it stifle all Affection to him?

Again, Have I, *says the gracious Soul*, an Apprehension of Divine Love and Grace manifested in the Redeemer? But how could this kythe? Or how were it possible to have the least Apprehension of it, if in this Life Believers only had Hope? Could the Son of the Living God think it worth his while, to assume our Nature, and lay down his Life only to purchase an earthly Felicity? or rather only to make our Lives miserable: Since he calls us to *deny our selves, and to crucify the World*: And tells us, which also we find, that *in the World we shall have Tribulation*? Sure, were there not an After-happiness and an After-glory, it might be said that the best of Men lived in vain:

Yea

Yea that the Son of God died in vain: *For if in this Life only Believers have Hope, then of all Men they are most miserable.* And all this would be a Supposition so horrid and inconsistent, that nothing more absurd and impious could once be imagined.

Again, Have I also, *says the Believer*, a Manifestation of the Divine Love to me in particular; such as works Wonders in my Heart, purifies, refines and perfects my Soul; makes it rise above the World, and aspire to a Conformity to the pure and spiritual Nature of God? And shall the Dust of Death cover and bury all this? Is it consistent in itself, that the Soul of Man should be staked down to an earthly Happiness? and yet that he should enjoy purer Delights than what's to be had from Earth: And be perfected in his Nature by these very Things, which would (upon such an absurd Supposition) be contrary to his End: I mean the *Denial of his earthly and sensual Satisfaction*? And as this is a Thought inconsistent in itself, so how is it consonant to any of the Divine Perfections? To which of his Attributes can such Infidels turn themselves, that when all the Creatures have their Ends commensurate to their Capacities, Men the only rational Creatures in this lower World, and especially the best of Men, to make them the most miserable, should have Capacities which exceed their End, and which in this Case would serve only to torment them?

Further, Have I also a Sensation of pure and spiritual Joys, such as are homogeneous to the Nature of my Soul, and suitable to the most exalted and refined Reason? What Reason is there to suspect, that they shall not be eternal? To deny that there are such pure intellectual Joys, is to say that the Soul, which every one finds to be the Subject and Principle of Pleasure; yet that it has none of its own, or from its own natural Powers: And that all its Pleasures are owing to Matter.

And to imagine again, that these pure Soul-pleasures are less solid and satisfying than material and corporeal Delights, is as if one were saying, That the more a
Pleasure

Pleasure approaches to the Nature of God, who is a *Spirit*, that 'tis the more imperfect and less satisfying: A Saying, which would be infinitely injurious to the Living God.

Again, Since this is a Joy, which arises from an incorruptible Principle, *viz.* the Soul of Man, which being an indivisible Substance, cannot dissolve, but by Annihilation: And since the Object that feeds it is eternal, *viz.* the All-sufficient Eternal God, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*: How can it be imagined it should ever have an End? Sure no Man that believes any Thing of God, will ever think, that the infinitely good One will be envious of our Happiness, in denying the Good we are capable of, and have also a fervent Desire unto?

Yea further, If these Joys were not eternal, 'tis certain they are but delusive Joys; And what is this? A Joy that resembles the Divine Felicity, and causes us resemble his Nature: A Joy that perfects the Soul: A Joy that inspires us with noble Principles; and puts us upon great and noble Designs: A Joy that raises us above sordid Cares and brutish Pleasures: A Joy that restrains from Vice, and excites to Virtue: Shall this Joy be only delusive, and founded on Mistakes? O horrid and impious Inconsistency! Which yet would be, if this Joy were not eternal. For, were there no true Hope of eternal Glory, there could be no true Joy in God: A sour and sullen Despondency of Mind there might be, or a slavish Subjection, like the forced Enthralment of surly Devils; but not a Spark of any true Love, or any true Delight in God could ever be found in that Soul.

Again, *saith the heavenly Soul*, Do I attain even to a glorying and boasting in God? Sure this must be on a sure Ground, in Opposition to all Things that fail us in our greatest Need. And what Place were there for this glorying in God, unless he were *our God for ever and ever*? For what were our Lives worth, what were our Comforts worth; and what were we worth our selves, if there were no Hope of future Glory? Were there no Prospect of eternal Happiness, our Lives were

scarce

scarce worth the living, much less glorying in: For considering the Vanity and Vexation that accompanies every State, and the racking Cares, and vexatious Disappointments that attend every Lot, if to these should be added the Soul's spending itself in fruitless Pursuits after an eternal Happiness, which, according to such a vile Supposition, it could never reach, then we might freely say with *Solomon*, in a Case much the same, That an untimely Birth is better than he or she.

There being then such clear and undeniable Evidence from Scripture, and from what a gracious Soul hath already seen and felt of God, that there shall be an endless Happiness in Heaven: Therefore,

XLVIII. The Believer lifts up his Head, and raiseth his Neck, in the pleasing Admirations, and lively Expectation of the Glory to be revealed.

Is it only a passing Glance of God, or only a transient Taste of the heavenly Gift that I have in View, saith the Heaven-born and contemplative Soul? Sure no; 'tis neither all I desire, nor all I shall receive: Such a black Surmise shall never take Place in my Heart, that 'tis so much as possible, that the Lord would delight to tantalize his poor Creatures, and especially his Saints; as if he could find Pleasure in shewing them a Happiness, and bringing it to their Door, and then hide it from their Eyes, and keep it out of their Reach for ever. Is this meet to be thought of the infinitely good God? O let such a vile Suggestion be abhorred for ever!

More indeed cannot be had here but oblique Glances, refract and indirect Rays of the Glory of God: Not that God cannot reveal it, but that mortal Flesh cannot receive it; the Brightness of that Glory would strike our weak Sight blind: We could not see by Reason of so great a Light; 'tis Light inaccessible, unless tempered with Shadows, and would be to us as the thickest Darkness. But yet, saith the gracious Soul, tho' I have not seen, and therefore cannot fully describe the Glory of
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Heaven, yet I know it to be very great, great inexpressibly, and that 'tis laid up for me. I have not yet attained to Heaven's Glory, but I have been taking a Look of it afar off in believing Contemplations; *I have been walking about Zion, and telling the Towers thereof, and marking her Bulwarks.* I was never yet within Heaven's Threshhold, but I have got such a Foresight of its Glory, and such a Foretaste of its Joy, as wraps up my Soul in the rapturous Admiration of what I shall for ever possess; and it makes me cry out with Wonder and Amazement, *O how great is thy Goodness which thou hast laid up for the Sons of Men (a)!* The Earth is full of thy Goodness, O Lord. Many and rich are thy Blessings, and many are thy wonderful Works of Kindness unto the Children of Men! But what's the Goodness laid out, in Comparison of the Goodness laid up for them. The Glory possessed is great, but O 'tis nothing to the Glory in Reserve! O how great is this! O ye Angels and glorified Saints, put forth your Strength, and exert your Powers, in trying to conceive or express the Greatness of this Goodness: But as for me, *saith the gracious Soul,* 'tis altogether above my Reach. 'Tis a Glory as weighty as it is eternal (b); and I can do no more but with astonishing Admiration, cry, *How great is thy Goodness? And how ravishing is thy Beauty (c)?* For Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive, what God hath laid up for those that fear him (d). Behold Men and Angels, *What Manner of Love is this,* where-with the Father hath loved such Dust as we are, *that we should be called the Children of God,* and be allied to Angels, and Expectants of Glory! But it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but only in general we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (e). Hence

XLIX. The

(a) Psal. xxxi. 19. (b) 2 Cor. iv. 17. (c) Zech. ix. 17. (d) 1 Cor. ii. 9. (e) 1 John iii. 1, 2.

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XLIX. *The Believer having such a great Prospect, and well-grounded Hope of Glory, he cannot express what Joy he now attains unto.*

What can be thought now, but that upon such a pleasing and ravishing View of Glory, the Heart of a Man should leap, and the Spirit within him dance for Joy? What Emotions, saith the gracious Soul, doth this raise in my Soul? What Pleasures doth it infuse into my Soul? What Exaltation of Mind? O intimate, enclosed, and safe Joys! Joys that reach the Heart, and penetrate into the Spirit of a Man! O pure Delights! There is no Baseness of the Action, no Reflection of Guilt, no Qualm of Conscience to confound these rational Joys. O generous and noble Pleasures! 'Tis well done, and wisely done, and worthy of a Soul, to place its highest Satisfaction in the Enjoyment of God, and to reach the utmost Happiness the Soul is capable of. O serene and severe, and at the same Time transporting Joys! I'll sit down before the Lord with a Divine Sort of Stupor, and wonder at his Grace. O sublime and transcendent Joys! Ye brutish Worldlings that are Strangers to all this, how much are ye to be pitied with your sordid Pleasures, and dunghill Satisfactions, which may appear amiable in the Varnish, but within are ugly and frightful as the Devils in Hell? But the Joy, says the exulting Believer, which is transfused into my Soul, is high and sublime; it enlarges, and, at the same Time, quiets my Appetite; or rather it quiets my Soul in the certain Expectation, that Desire, tho' long deferred, shall at length be accomplished, beyond what either Hope can expect, Desire crave, or Thought conceive. Lord, *thou hast bestowed upon my Heart, saith the warm Soul, more Gladness than they when their Corn and Wine increased* (a). *Thy Kingdom consists in Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost* (b). *O be glad in the Lord ye Righteous, and shout for Joy*

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(a) Psal. i. 7. (b) Rom. xiv. 17.

all ye that are upright in Heart (a). Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice (b).

L. *The gracious Soul becomes certainly persuaded, that these are not delusive and phanstatick, but sincere and real Joys.*

Some who have no Thought, and make no other Use of their Souls, but to serve them in eating and drinking; or to be as Salt to keep their Bodies from rotting, have not so much as a Notion of this spiritual and heavenly Joy. 'Tis to them as an armful of Shadows which they cannot grip.

Others, tho' through a common Light, they may have some confused general Notion of it; yet to their depraved Minds 'tis a gustless and insipid Thing, and to it appears to them but as a notional and not a real Joy. And others perhaps cannot imagine a real Joy, where there is not a present Fruition.

But is it the less real, *says the contemplative heavenly Soul*, because not in gross sensible Things; or because it is intellectual and spiritual? What then comes of the refined Pleasures which contemplative Minds find in the Search and Discovery of Truth? Or is the rational knowing Man the most cheated Person in the World, who yet would not exchange his Delights for all the World's Pelf, or the Flesh's Pleasure? Yea, what becomes of all the Joys of Heaven, where there is no eating nor drinking, no marrying nor giving in Marriage? And what would become of the Happiness of Angels, and glorified Saints? Or are Beasts and Animals of Pleasure, the only happy *Things* in the World?

Again, Is it not real, because there is not at present a full Enjoyment? Reason will remonstrate, Experience controul, and every Man's Sense will contradict this: For what would then become of the Worldling's Joy, when Heaven knows, and their own Hearts may know, that all their Joy is mainly in Hope and Expectation?

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(a) Psal. xxxii. 11. (b) Philip. iv. 4.

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And what confounds *all*, their Hopes will in End prove vain, and their Endeavours fruitless.

But in heavenly Things, when our Thoughts and Desires rise to their utmost, our Expectations may rise beyond them; and our Enjoyments will at length go beyond even our Expectation and Hope^(a); which Hope also partakes of the Thing hoped for. 'Tis not really a consummate Joy, because 'tis a real Joy; and the more that Hope participates of the Thing hoped for: For Grace enters upon, begins, and runs into Glory.

No Joy then can be compared unto it in Point of *Reality*; and all Joys that are not phantastick and imaginary, are included in it. 'Tis from a real Object, 'tis from God who only *Is*, who is *Being* itself ^(b), and *the Rock of Ages*. 'Tis from real Grounds, the *All-sufficiency* of God, and the Truth of his Promises. 'Tis from a real Cause, 'tis from real Grace, real Holiness. It has real Effects; it forms, purifies, and elevates the Soul. How could it cause a Man deny the Pleasures of the Flesh, and the Profits of the World, if it were not real? Or how could it support him in Wants, Sickness, Pain, Reproach? Or how could it comfort and revive him in a dying Hour, if it were not real? Do Men then use to be taken with Fancies, and Appearances only? Or how could it dispose the Heart to love God, and obey his Laws? Or be a Means of a most holy and excellent Life? Are these the Effects of Ignorance, Error, and Delusion? 'Tis impossible to believe this, and to believe there is a Diety, or to believe this and believe the natural and intrinsic Difference between Good and Evil, Light and Darkness, Truth and Falseness.

(a) 1 Cor. ii. 9. (b) Exod. 3. 4.

LI. *The Believer's Joys being so real, and the Foundation of them so sure, there is no persuading of him, that such sensible Emotions of Soul towards God and Christ, and Heaven, can be intemperate Heats, or frantick Enthusiasm; but, on the contrary, he is deeply affected, that he is so little affected with spiritual Things, and is persuaded, that could he attain unto more of a spiritual and heavenly Temper, it would be true masculine Piety.*

How canst thou think otherwise, O my Soul, if thou either consider what God is in himself, or what he has manifested himself in Christ to such a poor Sinner as thou art? Canst thou express the high and grateful Apprehensions the Saints had of old, when venting themselves thus: *The Glory of the Lord shall endure for ever (a). Be thou exalted above the Heavens, O Lord, and let thy Glory be above all the Earth (b). Thy Name alone is excellent; thy Glory is above the Earth, and also the Heavens (c). Or hast thou Words to express that overflowing Admiration, and rapturous Strain of the Apostle in that extatical Prayer of his; That he would grant you, according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with all Might by his Spirit in the inner Man: That Christ may dwell in your Hearts by Faith, that being rooted and grounded in Love, ye may be able to comprehend with all the Saints, what is the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height, and to know the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge (d).*

Or hast thou any Emotions of Heart that come near these. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my Soul thirsteth for thee; my Flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, to see thy Power and thy Glory, as I have seen thee in thy Sanctuary (e). My Soul followeth hard after thee, and thy right Hand doth uphold me (f). My Soul breaketh for the longing I have to thy Statutes at all Times (g). O
that

(a) Psal. civ. 31. (b) Psal. lvii. 11. (c) Psal. cxlviii. 13. (d) Eph. iii. 16, 17, 18, 19. (e) Psal. l. iii. 13 (f) Psal. lxxviii. 8. (g) Psal. cxix. 20.

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that I had Wings like a Dove, that I might fly away, and be at Rest (a). Or is this an hypocritical Description of the Christian's Joy, when the Apostle calls it a Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory (b): And as if this were not sufficient, when he calls it a Peace that passeth all understanding (c).

Again, can there indeed be an Excess of Love to God, and the blessed Jesus, or too lavish Expressions of the same? This will happen (but not till then) whenever finite exceeds infinite; or whenever we can give in a Superplus of Return to his Love; or when Expressions can exceed the Thoughts that Believers have of Christ; or when their Thoughts of him exceed his infinite and inconceivable Excellencies.

And what less can the Almighty require of me, (or any Man) than to terminate the chief of our Desires upon him, and habitually prefer his Favour before Ten thousand Worlds? Can I think that the infinitely glorious God will so infinitely disparage himself, as that Clods of Earth, Lumps of Flesh, Trifles, Vanities, and fordid Delights, should be esteemed and desired more than himself, who only *Is* (d)? Yea, what has God of a Person, if he has not his chief Complacency and supreme Delight? Would I have the King of Heaven, the King of Glory, to come so much as in Comparison with Shadows, Vanities, Nothings, yea less than Nothings and Vanity; much less be horridly affronted by the bale Preference of them.

If the Happiness that a Believer expects, and in Part receives from God, be but a scrimp, or even a finite Happiness, then perhaps the Subject might be exhausted, or there might be some Overdoing in the Business; but is it so in this Case? *Canst thou by searching find out God* (e)? Or canst thou find Words to express how great and how sweet are the Communications of his Favour, and the Consolations of his Love, when the Apostle tells, *he counted all Things not only as nothing,*
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(a) Psal. lv. 6. (b) 1 Pet. i. 6. (c) Philip. iv. 7. (d) Isa. xlviii. 12. (e) Job xi. 17.

but even as *Loss*, in Comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ (a).

Can there then be any Fear of overloving God? Or any Need of moderating our Affections to him? O my Soul, how infinitely deficient art thou in thy Returns of Love? *What canst thou render unto the Lord for all his Benefits bestowed upon thee?* Nothing but some poor Thoughts and languid Passions, which bear not the least Proportion to these immense and innumerable Blessings thou has, and expects from him. Yea, suppose thy Love and Devotion to arise to a seraphick Flame, would thou not still be under an everlasting Impossibility of returning answerable Love to him, or expressing the Sense of his infinite Love to thee? What do the *glorified Spirits* mean by their *casting down their Crowns before the Lamb*, and him that sits on the Throne (b)? And what do the *Seraphims* mean, by their *covering their Faces* (c), before the resplendent Holiness of God, but that they hold their All of free Goodness, are under an eternal Impotence of ever making suitable Returns, and are of themselves nothing; and that they are infinitely and everlastingly in Debt to free and rich Grace?

And, *said the Believer*, have I not Reason deeply to lament the many Sins and Imperfections that attend my best Frame, and best Services? How dull is my Heart, and how cold is my Love? If it were not so, how could there be such Weariness in Duties? How could the World have such a Share in my Affection? Why could not the All-sufficiency of God be enough to me, tho' bereaved of all worldly Comforts? O that it were otherwise with me! O to have a Heart wholly transformed into Love! And O that all my Tears and Groans, and Mirth and Musick, were turned into the melodious Songs of Love, Joy and Praise!

'Tis true, there may be a composed Admiration of God, and of Christ, and his Love, when there is but little Commotion amongst the sensitive Powers: But who can think that the most calm and dispassionate, if a gracious Soul, will not find his Heart and Soul joining with these

(a) Philip. iii. 8. (b) Rev. iv. 10. (c) Isa. vi. 2.

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these Expressions; *I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength. The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortrefs, and my Redeemer, my God, my Strength in whom I will trust, my Buckler, and the Horn of my Salvation, and my high Tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised*(a). *Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: Thou art my God, and I will exalt thee* (b). *Thou art my God, and exceeding great Joy* (c). *Thy Statutes are better to me than Thousands of Silver and Gold* (d); *and sweeter than Honey from the Honey-comb* (e). *Thou hast brought me into thy Banqueting-house, and thy Banner over me was Love. Stay me with Flagons, comfort me with Apples; for I am sick of Love* (f). *Until the Day break, and the Shadows fly away: Make haste my Beloved, and be thou like a young Hart upon the Mountains of Bether* (g).

'Tis true also, there may be a warm Fervour among the Passions, when there is not the least Motion of the Soul Heavenwards; as when either the *Imagination* is gratified with false Notions of spiritual Things, or if true Notions, yet they are Notions of them only as amiable Truths, but not as suitable, far less as up-making good Things. But the spiritual Sensations, and spiritual Emotions already described, as they are rational, so they ly deep in the Soul, and are formative of its State and Temper; they cast the Soul into a Divine Mould, and impress it with the Divine Image, and put all the Powers of the Soul into a spiritual Tune, and suitable Frame. Wherefore,

LII. *The gracious Soul is no less pleased with the Precepts, than ravished with the Promises of God.*

Is there so much Joy in God and his Ways? Then, saith the Soul that feels it, I'll not count any Duty burdensome, nor the Exercise of any Grace hard, nor any Part of Christ's Yoke grievous: He commands me who hath loved me; and whose I am, and whom I love. He

(a) Psal. xviii. 1, 2. (b) Psal. cxviii. 28. (c) Psal. xliii. 4. (d) Psal. cxix. 72. (e) Psal. ix. 10. (f) Cant. ii. 4, 5. (g) Cant. ii. 17.

He commands me, the Nature and End of whose Commandments is, *that my Joy should be full*; and also out of the Reach of Men and Devils; therefore let him command what he will, tho' the most self-denying, and Flesh-curbing Duties, I would fain, through his Grace, obey him: And let him impose what he will, whether Pain, or Sickneſs, or Poverty, Diſgrace, or Loſs of Friends, I would fain, through his Grace, ſubmit to him. *None of his Commands are grievous to me* (a), not Self-denial; I delight to ſee myſelf to be nothing, and to be all and only in him. O how pleaſant to be no more in a Conflict between two Ends, God and Self, but to find them both one, the beſt Self-intereſt being ſecured in the Favour of God.

Nor is the ſour-like Grace of Repentance an unpleaſant Exerciſe. I find a ſecret Satisfaction, when I am ſo kindly affected towards God, as to hate what he hates, and love what he loves. It does me Good at the Heart, to find my Soul melting in Sorrow, and diſſolving in Tears, for the Offence I have done to ſuch a great and ſuch a good God.

Nor do I count humble Reſignation to the Divine Will, an unpleaſant State of Soul; but contraryways, as 'tis a creaturely and kind Grace, ſo it brings much Eaſe to my Mind; where there is no more any diſputing with God, who ſhall have his Will, but this Matter is ſettled, that God's Will ſhall ſtand, and I ſhall reſt in it, as being ay holy, juſt and good. And O! I never find my Heart right placed, or where it ſhould be, but when conquieſcing in thy Will, O rightful Lord and Redeemer!

And how delightful, *ſaith the gracious Soul*, is univerſal Purity of Heart and Life? I never found Peace or Content in my Heart, while any one Sin was willingly harboured and entertained there. All the Darkneſs and Deadneſs, all the Trouble and Diſorder that ever I found in my Soul, is from *ſinful Sin*. *All the Ways of God are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all his Paths, Paths of Peace* (b). How great and inexpressible is my Satisfaction, when I find that I behave *dutifully* to God,

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(a) 1 John v. 3. (b) Pro. iii. 17.

justly to Man, and decently to mine own Soul! O how easy is *Christ's Yoke*, and how light his *Burden* (a)! Which is easiest, to serve an infinite Number of sorrowful Idols (b), or to have the Matter settled beyond all further Dispute, that *we shall serve the Lord, and his Voice will we obey?* Which is pleasantest, to be toiling on in the Drudgery of Sin, when all the *Wages* that can be expected from such a Master, is only Hell and Death (c)? Or for a Soul, in the Exercise of *Holiness and Continuance in Well-doing*, to be seeking for Honour, Glory, Immortality and eternal Life (d)? Have not I, says the gracious Soul, a delightful Work of it, in Comparison of Satan's Slave, of Sin's Drudge? *Thy Law is very holy, O Lord, therefore thy Servant loveth it* (e). O that I were conform to thy Image; and *that my Ways were directed to keep thy Statutes* (f)! O that I could serve the Lord, and do his Will with more Strength and Vigour, Joy and Alacrity of Spirit! 'Tis good for me to draw near to God. *Thy Statutes shall be my Counsellors and my Comforters, in the House of my Pilgrimage.* And tho' the Flesh should count the Way to Heaven a high Ascent, yet if the Joy of the Lord be my Strength, I'll mount in Hope, as on Eagles Wings, I'll walk and not be faint, run and not be weary (g).

LIII. *Now the Soul is much enlarged to run the Way of God's Commandments.*

O now, saith the Believer, the Capacity of my Soul is so widened, and its Power is so enlarged, and its Affections are so raised and elevate, that from this Time and forward, through the Grace of God, through the Blood of Christ, through the Efficacy of the Promises, through the Virtue of Faith and the Power of Love, I'll go on in exercising every Grace, performing every Duty, and resisting every Sin. I'll be conscientious in having Respect to all God's Commandments, in seeking the Kingdom of Heaven, and its Righteousness, in the first

(a) Matth. xi. 28. (b) Psal. 16. 4. (c) Rom. vi. 7. (d) Rom. ii. 7. (e) Psal. cxix. 140. (f) Psal. cxix. 5. (g) Isa. xl. 31.

first Place (a), in loving Mercy, doing justly, and walking humbly with my God (b), in denying all Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and living soberly, righteously and godly in a present evil World (c); and in following whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are virtuous and amiable (d); I'll give all Diligence to add to my Faith Vertue, to Vertue Knowledge, to Knowledge Temperance, to Temperance Patience, to Patience Godliness, to Godliness Brotherly-kindness, to Brotherly-kindness Charity (e). I'll count it my very Meat and Drink to do the Will of my heavenly Father (f): I'll serve him, not negligently, but with the best Bent of my Heart, and the utmost Extent of my Power, doing all that I can for the Purity and Power of Godliness in myself and others, and for the Glory of God and the Honour of Christ's Kingdom and Interest in the World. I'll run the whole Compass of Duty belonging to me as a Man and as a Christian, and look not only to the Matter of my Duties, but to the Quality of them. I'll aim, saith the enlarged Soul, at the very highest Strains of Grace, even that of being rich in Spirituals, and poor in Spirit; that of being lifted up with Joy, and yet low in Humility; that of having nothing, and yet as possessing all Things; that of trusting in a hiding or frowning God, and against Hope rejoicing in Hope; that of brooking willingly to be despised for Christ's Sake, and preferring inward Humility and Sincerity before all the Applauses of Men; and that of bearing Affronts, Contempts, and pinching Necessities with a calm composed Mind; and that of Self-denial, and taking up the Cross, and following Christ, through Honour and Dishonour, through good Report and bad Report, through the hottest Services and hardest Sufferings. I'll even labour for the utmost Perfection in Grace. *I am far from having yet attained, as if I were already perfect, but I follow that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus: I count not myself to have apprehended,*
but

(a) Matth. vi. 33. (b) Micah vi. 8. (c) Tit. ii. 12. (d) Philip. iv. 8. (e) 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. (f) John iv. 34.

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but this one Thing I do, forgetting those Things that are behind, and reaching forth unto these Things that are before, I press towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus (a). I love the Lord, because he hath heard my Voice and my Supplications. Because he hath inclined his Ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The Sorrows of Death compassed me, and the Pains of Hell gat hold upon me, I found Trouble and Sorrow. Then called I upon the Name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my Soul. Gracious is the Lord and righteous, yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple, I was brought low and he helped me. Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my Soul from Death, mine Eyes from Tears, and my Feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living. I believed, therefore have I spoken, I was greatly afflicted. I said, when I was in my Haste, all Men are Liars. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his Benefits towards me. I will take the Cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. I will pay my Vows unto the Lord now in the Presence of all his People. Precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of his Saints. Oh Lord, truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant, and the Son of thy Handmaid, thou hast loosed my Bonds (a).

LIV. *The Believer proceeding in such sure Steps, and ascending by such sure and apt Gradations to Heaven, his Heart heaves up, and is wholly tuned to the triumphant Praises of God and his Grace.*

Can the heavenly Soul altogether hold in his secret Sense of these Things? Can he smother such Heart-reviving and Heart-overcoming Meditations? O! No, no. His Thoughts begin to rise within him, and to swell to such a Length and Height, as he cannot contain.

Have I the certain Prospect of beholding the Glory of God, of standing about his Throne, and of being eternally

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(a) Philip. xiii. 14. (b) Psal. cxvi. 1----16.

eternally satisfied with his infinite and overflowing Goodness? O wonderful! And have I the pure and ravishing Joy that springs from the lively and certain Hope of Heaven's Happiness; and all this besides the refined Pleasures, which, being interwoven with every Grace and every Duty, leave such a delightful Relish in my Soul? O I hug my Soul in its happy Condition! *The Lines are fallen to me amidst Pleasantnesses, and I have a goodly Heritage (a)!* And whence is all this to me? Whence but from the Mercy and Kindness of the Lord, which have been of old (b); and his Truth which endureth for ever (c). O but the Lord is gracious, and full of Compassion (d); slow to Anger, and of great Mercy (e)! Who is a strong God like unto thee, and thy Faithfulness round about thee (f)? Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds (g). Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits: Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities: Who redeemeth thy Life from Destruction, and satisfieth thee with good Things (h). O that all the Sorrows, and all the Griefs which throb my Heart, and all the Mirth and Joy which enlarge the same, were turned into one melodious incessant Song of free Grace, redeeming Grace! Let my Soul magnify the Lord, and my Spirit rejoice in God my Saviour (i). And O that I could mention the loving Kindness of the Lord, and the Praises of the Lord, according to his great Goodness, and according to the Multitude of his tender Mercies (k).

LV. The Heaven-born and Heaven-breathing Soul is now on the next Step to Heaven, but before he can reach it, the dark and gloomy Valley of Death must be passed.

And here many Clouds are like to o'ercast the Soul. Which Way soever I view Death, says the thoughtful Man,

(a) Psal. xvi. 6. (b) Psal. xxv. 6. (c) Ps. cxvii. 2. (d) Ps. cxvi. 3. (e) Ps. ciii. 8. (f) Ps. lxxxix. 8. (g) Ps. xxxvi. 5. (h) Ps. ciii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. (i) Luke i. 46, 47. (k) Isa. lxiii. 7.

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Man, there is something casts up very uncouth, and very startling. Ever since I had a Being, I have been accustomed to bodily Sensations, but when Death cometh, I shall drop this Body, and become a naked Soul: And whatever Objects I take in, whether grateful or disagreeable, they shall be received without the Ministry of an organized Body, and without the Inlet of the Senses: And farewell then all corporal Enjoyments. But, what makes Death yet more awful, 'tis an Entrance into the invisible World, where the Face of God's Throne is turned upon the Soul, *and Hell is no more under a Covering (a)*. Yea, 'tis the Door to Eternity, where either 'tis all *Night* or all *Day*, an eternal Day, or an eternal Night: And so Death is the Gate whereby every Soul enters either into an Eternity in Heaven, or an Eternity in Hell: While the Body for a Time lies covered with Darkness in the Grave, and is shivered into Dust.

Yet if Faith be in a lively and vigorous Exercise, it can soon scatter these Mists, and dispel these Clouds.

I drop this Body, *says the Believer*, but what of this? 'Tis only the Body, which is the Shell and Tabernacle of the Soul, that is dissolved: For the Soul remains untouched and incorrupt, and takes its Flight unto Heaven and Glory. What Loss can I be at in slipping out from a Body of Corruption? In breaking the Fetters wherewith my Soul has been many a Time entangled? Or in laying down a Weight which did clog and depress my Soul, when it should have been mounting towards Heaven?

'Tis true, that by this I remove from all corporal Enjoyments: But what of all this? Were there indeed no other, or no better Comforts than these, Death indeed would look grim, and have a terrible Aspect: But who can believe this, that believes he has a Soul, or a Substance within him, more perfect than his Body? If there be a reasonable Spirit in a Man, why are not its noblest Pleasures fetcht from the Acts of Reason, and not from the Impressions of Sense? Shall the most perfect Substance fetch its best Pleasures from that which

is more imperfect? Or shall the noble and immortal Spirit, so far degenerate and forget itself, as to bow down and serve the Body for the Pleasures it relishes?

Well then, says the heavenly Soul, I know here what I should do, and what I would fainest be at in all the World. I'll be training up my Soul, and inuring it to rational, spiritual, and heavenly Delights, which my Soul can carry alongst with it where ever it goes, whether in the Body, or out of the Body, and which can subsist after Death. And what be these? They are the amiable Views, and delightful Contemplations of the glorious Excellencies of God, and the blessed Jesus: They are the Pleasures of Faith, Love, Hope, Conformity to God, and Acquiescence in him, &c.

So that I have already some experimental Sense of the Way of living happily in the other World. I have been accustoming myself to Divine *Meditation*, which can fetch from far and near all the amiable Perfections of the Deity, all the alluring Perfections of Christ, and all the Glories of Heaven, to ruminate upon, and fill me with sweet Solace. I have been essaying also to live by that *Faith*, that apprehends all the Fulness of God and of the Mediator, and applies them for Use to answer all my infinite Occasions. I think I ken something of living in *Love* to God and the blessed Redeemer, and sweetly acquiescing in him as infinitely amiable and satisfying. And so far as *Self denial* takes Place in me, I find nothing more sweet and pleasing to my Mind, than to go out of myself to give Room to Christ, that he may be all in all to my Soul. I find also that Dependance on the Lord is a pleasant Posture of Spirit, being the Soul's settling on that All-sufficiency that's enough for all the Angels in Heaven. And in a free and voluntary *Subjection* to God, I find all the Delights of Resignation to the Divine Will. And now being to go out of this World with such Divine Principles in-wrought in me, I know how to live and live happily in the next. 'Tis in the other World my Faith, if there be any Place for it, shall make bright Discoveries, without the Darknes and Hesitation there is in Unbelief. My Meditation shall then be

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no longer distracted with the innumerable diverting and seducing Objects of this Life, but I shall contemplate the Divine Excellencies endlessly in themselves, and in their Communications; where I am sure I shall see enough to affect me with Wonder and Transport, and Joy for ever. Love shall then be no more in a Contention or Demur about different interfering and challenging Objects; for there it finds its proper Object, even him who is only *lovely, and altogether lovely!* 'Tis then that Self-denial, that pleasant Grace, will be in its Perfection: The proud Flesh, which was the main Thing that did compete, being laid in the Grave. And Dependance shall there have nothing to do, but to live and subsist immediately on the Divine Fulness: But the Divine Fulness, said I! what can be better? what so good? Yea, what else can serve the Turn? And 'tis then, that I'll count it my Meat and Drink to serve the Lord in a perfect Manner: For there the Competitors with the Will of God are no more; Corruption is extirpate; the Flesh is laid by; the World is not; and Devils can never again reach me. How pleasant is the View that a sanctified Soul may have through Death and beyond it!

Doth Death undress and unclothe me with respect to this Body? Then 'tis certain, says the thinking Soul, I shall be happy or miserable in the other World, according to that State of Soul and Temper of Mind, wherewith I go out of this. If my Delights and Satisfactions were confined to Things sensible and worldly, that are altogether foreign to the Nature of my Soul, and no ways adapted to its Exigencies, that would be sad indeed: For what then would become of me, when a naked Soul, and when removed from all corporal Enjoyments? But, on the other Hand, says the gracious and heavenly Soul, since my Affections are terminate in God, and since I settle my Soul, and place its Happiness only in him, here there is a Suitableness, and here there is a Sufficiency for my Soul; enough to entertain, to please and to ravish it; which Death, the Bereaver of earthly Comforts, cannot deprive me off. Let Desires then stretch themselves to the utmost, there is still more in God, more in Christ,

more in Heaven than I can find Desires for. And let Love, Delight, and Joy swell in Height, in Length, in Breadth through all Eternity, there is enough in God to satiate them, without being glutted, and as little disappointed.

Again 'tis true, saith the Soul, Death enters me into the *invisible* and *unknown* World: But why was I planted in this World, but in order to be transported into the next? And should not the World I go to, have more of my Heart, than the World I leave? I know not distinctly the invisible Regions, but the Lord *Emmanuel* is gone into that Country, and is Governor of that World, and therefore by Faith I can follow him, tho' into unknown Lands.

'Tis true again, saith the Believer, and which is most amazing, Death enters my Soul into *Eternity*: And this is a Breadth I can never fathom; a Length I can never reach, a Depth I can never dive. O Eternity! Eternity! what shall I compare thee unto? Eternity is a Beginning without any Beginning, Middle or End: Or a Beginning always beginning, never nearer the Middle, or nearer the End. But alas! Apprehension is dazled, and Invention is astonished, when I would search into Eternity! But O amazing, swallowing-up Eternity, tho' I cannot comprehend, yet may I never forget thee! O *that thou wert written in a Book, and graven with a Pen of Iron in the Rock for ever!* And O that my Heart were the *Book*, and my Meditation were the *Iron Pen*: Especially when Pleasure fanneth, or the Flesh rebelleth, or the Spirit faileth!

But is so long an Eternity before me, and Death so certain, and so near me? Then why, O my Soul, wouldst thou set up Rest on this Side of *Jordan*? What's a Minute to Eternity? What's thy short Puntilio of Time, to an endless Duration? And what are all the short Pleasures of Time to Eternal Joys? Is Death an Entrance into an Eternity? What's thy proper Work, O my Soul, and thy main Business, but by the Exercise of Prayer, Meditation, Repentance, Faith, Love, Hea-

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venly-mindedness, &c. to be trimming, preparing and fitting up thyself for a blessed and happy Eternity?

Why lookest thou but at a Distance to Eternity? Why behavest thou as if it were an *Un-friend Land*, or as if thou wert *Way-ward* from it? Nay rather haste and make ready, and God send thee good Speed to a bleisful Eternity!

Have I the delightful Prospect of entering by Death into an Eternity of Joy? Oh! I greatly complain, there is so little longing for Heaven! I do desire a Right to Heaven, and the Possession of its Glory, and all that *Righteousness*, that's necessary to inherit that everlasting Kingdom (a): But alas! how dully, heavily and heartlessly! For if crossed in worldly Affairs, or surprized with Losses, to be told of Heaven's Happiness, how small is the Comfort it affords! I find Nature favouring itself, loving the World, abhorring Death, and, in some Measure, loath to enter even into a happy Eternity. O that it were otherwise with me! O that I were more mindful of Heaven, and more fitted for its Glory! O that I had a greater Relish of its Joys! I put up my Petitions unto thee, O God: I make my Moan and Supplication unto thee, O Lord. O make me know in myself, what Heaven is. Give me such an experimental Sense of it, as may be in me *Begun-glory*: That notwithstanding my Respects to the Body, and Love to a natural Life, I may entertain the Summons of pale Death, not only contentedly and willingly, but also cheerfully and joyfully, as being but a dark Passage to the Land of *Light* (b), and a troublesome Passage to the Land of *Rest* (c): Which Passage and which Foord the blessed Redeemer hath gone, and passed before me, *who by Death hath destroyed Death, and him that had the Power of it, that is the Devil* (d): And having by Death given Death its deadly Wounds, hath vanquished Hell, and opened the Gates of Heaven. Therefore, says the Believer, *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil* (e): Why? Because
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(a) Matth. vi. 33. (b) Rev. xxi. 23. (c) Heb. iv. 9. (d) Heb. ii. 14. (e) Psal. xxiii. 4.

he is with me, who is the *first and the last*, and that *liveth and was dead*, and behold he is *alive for evermore*, Amen ; and hath the *Keys of Hell and of Death* (a).

LVI. *The Believer actually passing the Valley of Death, and getting through his last Conflict.*

Now the Believer enters into the List with his last Enemy, *Death*, and feels a hard Conflict with the same, but yet comes off victorious in the Issue. Many pensive Thoughts may cast up in his Mind; yet, if Faith be lively, it can dispel all the melancholy Clouds that Death would draw over the Soul, which may find him in such Exercise; and sometimes in such a Conflict of Thoughts as these.

Death, I see, is coming hard, and what fatal destroying Work will it make! But, O my Soul, saith the Believer, 'tis not mine immortal Spirit which is breathed in me from the Almighty, nor is it the Work of Grace, implanted by the Spirit of God, that is destroyed by Death; 'tis only the Work of Sin and the Work of Satan in the Soul. As for the Body, it hath no Life of its own, and it is only taken down to rear it up a more refined glorious Body.

Death hath already prevailed upon the Out-works of my Constitution and Frame: The Legs tremble, the Arms shake, the Nerves shrink with paralytick Motions. O my Soul, be content of this, and let it be with thy own Consent to depart from thy Body; for 'tis better to be absent from the Body than to be absent from the Lord, and the Believer while *absent from the Body*, is *present with the Lord* (b). Thou knows the Lord shall be thy Strength, and thy Salvation for ever (c).

My Head is already hanging down, and falling aside. Well, O my Soul, bow thy Head willingly, and give up thy Ghost into the Hands of thy Redeemer, and then thou shalt again lift up thy Head with Joy in the Possession of the Glory that is to be revealed, and lift up thy Face to God without Spot and without Fear (d).

(a) Rev. i. 17, 18. (b) 2 Cor. v. 8. (c) Psal. xxvii 1. (d) Job xi. 15.

Ah my Sins and Transgressions! there is nothing disquiets me so much as these. But, O my Soul, is it not the Blood of Christ that cleanseth from all Sin (a)? The Lord hath dealt graciously with thee to humble thee, and renew thee, and draw thee to a hearty Acceptation of Christ as a Saviour, and a sincere Resignation to him as thy Prince and Lord; and, by a fiducial Apprehension of Christ's Merit, thou art wrapt in his Righteousness, and art sensible the Power of Sin is broken, and the Pollution thereof is purged away; Why art thou then cast down, O my Soul, or disquieted within me? Hope thou in the Lord, for thou shalt yet praise him, who is the Health of thy Countenance and thy God (b). For who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect? since God hath justified, and Christ hath died, and hath risen from the dead, and maketh Intercession for us (c).

My natural Spirits are sunk and gone, and sit heavily on my Soul. Why, O my Soul, the Organ of the Body must lose its Temper and Tone before the immortal Soul can withdraw from it: But there are Promises, sufficient Cordials for Souls, particularly, that he'll give Power unto the Faint, and to him that hath no Might increase Strength (d).

I am departing out of the Land of the Living. Mistake not, O my Soul, 'tis but a dying Life, or a living Death thou goes from, and 'tis an immortal happy Life thou goes unto, where they live to God, and live in his Presence, and where they shall not die any more (e).

I am to stand immediately before the awful enlightened Tribunal of God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity. Well, O my Soul, Christ who hath loved thee, and washed thee in his Blood, will present thee there, not having Spot or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, but holy and without Blemish (f).

I am now turning pale and ghastly to look on. But, O my Soul, 'tis only thy Body that is so, and it shall be raised to an eternal vigorous Vivacity: As for thyself, thou

(a) 1 John i. 7. (b) Psal. xliii. 5. (c) Rom. viii. 33, 34.
(d) Isa. xl. 29. (e) Luke xx. 38. Rev. xxi. 4. (f) Rev. i. 5.
Eph. v. 27.

thou shalt appear in the perfect Beauties of Holiness from the Womb of the Morning, when thou comes forth from thy Body, and art brought forth as a new Creature in the heavenly Regeneration (a).

Darkness is now covering mine Eyes, and the Shadows of Death sit down upon them. But, O my Soul, complain not if Death close thine Eyes upon the Light of the Sun, Moon and Stars, since it opens thy Soul to behold the Light of God's Countenance and the Glory of his Face, in Comparison of which, the Sun of the Firmament is as Darkness; What Need have they of the Light of the Sun or Moon, when the Glory of God doth lighten all in Heaven, *and the Lamb is the Light thereof* (b).

If the Lord enter into Judgment with me, I cannot be justified. True, O my Soul, thou cannot be justified at the Tribunal of Justice, but is there not a Throne of Grace erected by Christ for the free Justification of a returning Sinner? O my Soul, hast thou not fled to the Throne of Mercy, and believed in Christ for Remission of Sin? Hast thou not (tho' alas thy many Sins and Imperfections) lived habitually in the Love of God, in the Admiration of Grace, and in Conformity to the Divine Will? And this could never have been wrought in thee, O my Soul, without a vital Union with Christ, and a Day of his Power. And are there any in Hell so affected to Christ and related to him? Will that Soul be sent to the Pit, whence there is no Redemption, that hath fled under the Wings of the Mediator, and hath turned unto God with all his Heart, and is breathing after Heart-purity and Life-purity, yea the nearest Conformity to God, his Nature, Image and Will, and would fain lead its Life, and spend its Time and Eternity in the Presence of the Lord? No, the Judge of all the Earth will certainly do right, do according to his own Constitution of Grace in the All-sufficient *Immanuel*.

My Heart akes and groans. Why, O my Soul, when present in the Body and absent from the Lord, **thou** must groan (c). Come forth, my Soul, come forth out of thy

(a) Psal. cx. 3. Matth. xix. 28. (b) Rev. xxi. 23. (c) 2 Cor. v. 2.

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thy Body, and then thou art in *Immanuel's Land*, where there is no sinning, and so there can be no fighting or groaning for ever.

Death is a solitary Path, where a Man walks alone in the Dark. Say not so, O my Soul; thou art not left alone, for when thou walkest in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Christ is with thee (a). Death is none of these dark dry solitary Places, where only the Dismal haunt: 'Tis a Path beaten by all before you: The best that ever lived have entred and passed through that Valley; yea the Son of God hath passed it. So that when dying, thou art but in the Path which the Prince of Life hath trodden, who hath gone through this dead Sea, and prepared a Way through this Depth into the heavenly Canaan.

My Lips quiver, my Tongue falters and begins to lose its Speech. But, O my Soul, when brought up into the higher Temple, every one there speaks of his Glory (b). And blessed are they that dwell in that Upper-house, for there they ever praise the Lord (c).

O what Trouble and Pain do I find in every Step of the Soul's Efforts to depart from its Body. But, O my Soul, endure all the Struggle with Patience, Courage, and a heavenly Magnanimity of Spirit. Why should not an Heir of Heaven be willing to take Possession of his Country, and go stich through all the Labours and Difficulties in the Way?

A cold Sweat is freezing my Blood and Spirits. But, O my Soul, mind thy Saviour, who while in the open Air, and on the cold Ground, and when it was far in the Night, did sweat, bearing our Sins, great Drops of Blood falling to the Ground (d).

Death is stinging my Heart. Say not so, O my Soul; say that Death pains thy Heart; but it was Christ thy Saviour that did bear its Sting. He who is Prince of Life encountred Death, when armed with the flaming Sword of Justice, when sharpened with a deadly Sting, and pointed with the dreadful Curses of the Law. And
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(a) Psal. xxiii. 4. (b) Psal. xxix. 9. (c) Psal. lxxxiv. 4.
(d) Luke xxi. 44.

now Death having wreck'd its Spite, and left its Sting in Christ as Surety for his People, what is the real Hurt of it? 'Tis only as a bitter Potion, a medicinal Pain, sharp indeed, but for the eternal Health and Happiness of the Soul: And thou mayst say, *O Death where is thy Sting* (a).

I am going out of the World. What World, O my Soul, art thou leaving? Is it not a World of Vanities and Vexations; a World of serious Sorrows and vain Comforts; a World of Cares, Burdens and Troubles; a World of empty Hopes, and certain Disappointments; a World of much Labour in running, fighting and striving for the Crown; and of yet greater Distress in finding we are not so successful as we would. And what is the great Odds between standing 50 or 500 Years gazing on the Theatre of this World, when all that is gotten by it, is but seeing the same Things so much the oftner; for Providence walks much in the same Circle, and Nature has much the same Face through all Ages. What Loss art thou at then in being translated to a better World, where they are now triumphing, while thou art fighting; now singing, while thou art sighing; and where they have no Need of the Sun, Moon or Stars; the Light of God's Countenance, which is the bright and Sunny-side of Providence, being turned upon them for ever.

I find myself unable to bear up under Death's heavy Hand, or to stand under its Shocks. But, O my Soul, thou canst cry, Lord Jesus, be present with me dying; Lord Jesus, support me agonizing; Lord Jesus, comfort me sighing; Lord Jesus, receive me expiring. Thou canst stay thyself on Christ, thy Light and Salvation, and the Strength of thy Heart and Life (b). Thou hast been going up through this Wilderness (c) leaning on thy Beloved, lean and rest on him still through the rough, dark and dangerous Valley of Death.

Time Enjoyments now cease. Not all the Enjoyments, O my Soul, thou met with in Time will or can cease. 'Tis in Time thou hast enjoyed sweet Communion with

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(a) 1 Cor. xv. 55. (b) Psal. xxii. 1. (c) Cant. viii. 5.

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Jehovah and the Lamb: 'Tis in Time thou hast had many a sweet Hour in drawing near to thy God, and thy blessed Redeemer, wherein there hath been strong and pleasant Outgoings of thy Heart towards him, and a sweet Satisfaction in staying thyself upon him. Nothing of this can Death bereave thee of; for who can separate us from the Love of God, *neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (a).* So that, O my Soul, all thy spiritual Enjoyments thou takes with thee to the other World, are there perfected for ever. 'Tis only then, the Enjoyments that were to serve but for a Time that now cease, when Time shall be no longer, and when there is no more Occasion for them.

O hard Wrestlings and violent Pangs! But O my Soul, dost thou suffer any Agonies and Pains like those of Jesus Christ; when he grappled with the Wrath of God, and the Powers of Darknes, and the Sorrows of Hell compassed him about, and who, notwithstanding of his having the Fulness of the Deity to support him, the Ministry of an Angel to strengthen him, and the Assurance of Victory to encourage him, was amazed and sorrowful even unto Death (b), and all this he suffered for thee; it was all to destroy the Power of Death, and to make it tolerable, yea profitable; and that thou mayst say, *That to die is gain (c).*

My Breathing is making great Stops and Pauses, 'tis near ceasing. But O my Soul, 'tis not the Air thy Body draws in, but the vital Breath of the Father of Spirits that is thy Life, and thy Air, and thy Element. If the Spirit of Christ, which is the Spirit of Life, be in thee, thou shalt live and breathe in the Air of Glory: And without this a Soul, were it even in the midst of Heaven, would pant and gasp in the Throws of eternal Death.

I am to make my Appearance among the glorious Angels, Archangels, Cherubims, Seraphims: How unfit am

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(a) Rom. viii. 33, 34. (b) Mat. xiv. 33. (c) Philip. i. 21.

I to be seen among such a fair, glorious, and majestic Company! But, O my Soul, thou art clothed with the Righteousness of Christ the Son of God, and therefore, thou art clear as the Sun, and fair as the Moon (a), and may lift up thy Face among the glorious Cherubims and shining Seraphims without Fear.

My Heart is now failing me. But, O my Soul, hath not the Lord said, He will never leave thee nor forsake thee (b), and that when Heart and Strength faileth, God is the Strength of thy Heart, and Portion for ever (c).

I am losing my Body, an essential Part of me, yea, as another Self. But, O my Soul, Hast thou much Reason to regret the parting with that which hath so much incumbered thee, yea defiled thee? Is it not the Body, and its Appetites, that hath so much muted the Wings of the Soul, when it should have been soaring upwards and Heavenwards on the Wings of Faith and Love? Hath it not been the Interest of the Flesh, that hath competed many a Time with the more valuable Interests of the Spirit? Hath it not been as a very imperious Handmaid to the Soul, when it should have been commanded by it? Hath it not caused often a sinful Division of the Heart between God and the World? And besides, thou dost not lose it, but parts with it only for a Season; as a Person lays by an Instrument he hath no Use for at present, or puts off a Shoe that pinches him: And thou shalt meet with it again a glorious Body, and more fitted to be a Companion to an immortal Spirit.

*The Moment of Dissolution is at Hand, when my Soul steps out of Time into Eternity: This is a thoughtful Change. True it is, O my Soul; but mind that the Word of God calls it by the agreeable and sweet Term of *Awakening*, When I awake, saith the Psalmist (d), I shall be satisfied with thy Likeness. The Life here in this World is a Dream, where all is acted by Images in the Fancy, but let the Soul depart, 'tis awakened out of this Dream, and hath no Occasion for the Images of Objects painted in the Imagination, since 'tis now, and never till now,*

(a) Cant. vi. 10. (b) Heb. xiii. 5. (c) Psal. lx. iii. 26. (d) Psal. xvii. 15.

now, thoroughly awake to see every Thing as it is, and God as he is (a).

I am presently a naked Soul. Say not so, O my Soul, if thou hast put on the Lord Jesus (b), if cloathed with Immortality (c), if covered with our House which is from Heaven (d), if beautified with the Graces of the Spirit of God, if made all glorious within, and brought into the Chamber of the King's Presence, in Raiment of Needle-work (e). Say not thou art naked, when so well adorned with all the Embroideries of Heaven.

How shall I find myself, when a pure Spirit. How hast thou before now found thyself, O my Soul, in these golden Hours, when retiring from the World to be inward with God, and being refined from Earth, and elevate in thy Spirit above earthly and carnal Things; thou couldst not express what inward Satisfaction thou hadst in a high Complacency in God, fervent Love to him, and a worshipping Posture at his Throne; and when thou couldst not by Words make another understand, what Pleasure and Delectation thou felt in the profound Veneration of eternal Wisdom, eternal Power, eternal Goodness and eternal Holiness; and what Heaven-like Joy thou experienced in deep Humility, Self-denial, Abstraction of Mind from the World, living above corporeal Sensations, and a thankful praiseful Frame towards God. Think on these, and consider them, as perfected in a separate gracious Soul, and thou may ken somewhat how it will find itself.

My Soul is now going out of my Hands. What? my Soul, speak not so; for if thou means it was maintained and upheld by thee, it was never in thine own Hands, nor had thou ever any Support but the immediate Hand of God. One Body may bear up another, but a Spirit can have no Stay but God; nor can any Thing supply it, whether it be without or within a Body, but the Fullness of God the Father of Spirits. And hast thou not before now committed thy Spirit unto God? Did not thou see the Need of this, even while thy Soul lodged in

(a) Ezek. iii. 2. (b) Rom. xiii. 14. (c) 2 Cor. v. 4. (d) 2 Cor. v. 2. (e) Psal. xlv. 13, 14.

in thy Body; and didst thou not say, Blessed Redeemer, I commit all that relates to me, in Time and through Eternity, into thy Hands, and I am persuaded, thou wilt keep the Trust I commit to thee (a).

My Body is left in Death's Hands. Say rather, O my Soul, that thy Body remains in Death's Territories, and only in such Territories thereof as belong to Immanuel's special Empire and Kingdom, who is *the First and the Last, and was dead and is alive, and behold he liveth for evermore*, and hath the Keys of the invisible World, and of Death (b). And so *the Day will come, that all that are in the Grave shall hear his Voice, and these that hear shall live* (c).

My Body will now turn loathsome to look at, and dissolve into the Dust. But, O my Soul, hath not the earthly House of thy Body been but a smoaky one? How often have the Fumes of indwelling Concupiscence made thine Eyes to gush with Tears? And has it not been a very strait and narrow Lodging to the Soul, causing many a Time great Pressures and Oppressions upon thy Spirit? And hath it not been but a dropping Cottage at best; one Defluxion coming down after another from the weak distempered Head? And now thou layest it down, and with it all Principles of Corruption, Mortality and Disorder, and shall take it up again at the Resurrection, spiritual and incorruptible, and receiving an ~~an~~ uninterrupted Influence of Life, Health, and vigorous Immortality from Christ the great Head and Lord: For, tho' sown in Corruption, it shall be raised in Incorruption; tho' sown in Weakness, it shall be raised in Power; tho' sown in Dishonour, it shall be raised in Glory; tho' sown a natural Body, it shall be raised a spiritual Body (d); and tho' laid down a vile Body, it shall be raised and made conform to the glorious Body of Christ (e). And what Loss is there in all this?

O the sharp Conflict in the extreme Moment! But, O my Soul, if this be a great, it is the last Conflict with the

(a) 2 Tim. i. 12. (b) Rev. i. 17, 18. (c) John v. 25. (d) 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. (e) Philip. iii. 21.

the last Enemy, Death, and it is but a Moment, and then thou shalt be beyond all Conflicts for ever; *for there shall be no more death* (a). Didst not thou, O my Soul, many a Time, when groaning under the Body of Sin and Death, own before the Lord, that if a sharp Rod be necessary for promoting the Work of Mortification, thou wouldst be satisfied that the Lord should lay this on thee, for the killing of Sin, the purifying of thy Spirit, and the fitting thee more to the serving of God here, and the Enjoyment of him hereafter, rather than be so oppressed with the Power and Importunity of thy Corruption? And now art thou not willing to endure this short, tho' sharp Conflict, when so near the Crown, and where there shall be no more Sin, and where *his Servants shall serve him* (b) in the most perfect Manner, and have Communion with him as they would? Doth it not comfort thee that this is the last Combat, and the Crown is at Hand, the last tempestuous Wave, and the delectable Haven is near, the last painful Struggle, and now there is *entering into the Joy of our Lord* (c).

I am taking Farewel of all Friends. Say not so, O my Soul: Thou art going to the best Company, and to thy best Friends, even to God thy Father, to Christ thy Elder Brother, the best Friend that ever poor Souls had; thou art going where there are Angels and Arch-angels, these benign Beings that have so often ministered to thee here; where are Prophets and Apostles, on whose Doctrine all thy Hopes are built; where are Martyrs, Confessors, and all holy Men that have died; and where there are no separate Interests or unhallowed Disputes to cool their Love; and where are all thy natural Relations that have died in the Lord. Thou dost not then, O my Soul, lose thy Friends, but goes to the Place appointed a little before them, where thou art gathered; not to the Congregation of the Dead, but of the Living.

My Heart breaks, fails, dies. It will be so, O my Soul, when thou retires from the Body. The Soul can.

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(a) Rev. xxi. 4. (b) Rev. xxii. 3. (c) Matth. xxv. 23.

not live any longer in a Body, or in the Heart of a Body when 'tis gone from it. 'Tis the Soul that lives in the Heart, and a Soul can have no Perception or Conscience or Motion in a Heart when it has retired from the same. It must carry its Thoughts, Perceptions and Self-activity along with it unto the Throne of God, when it returns unto him (a).

I am now stepping over the Threshold into the invisible World. Christ Jesus be with thee, O my Soul; the Lord Jesus be with thy Spirit: The Lord Jesus give his Angels charge concerning thee, that thou may be carried into Abraham's Bosom. *Into thy Hand I commit my Spirit, thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth* (b). *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit* (c). *I know in whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that Day* (d). I have not with Paul been caught up into the third Heavens, and seen the ineffable Glory (e). I have not with Daniel seen the Ancient of Days sitting with Thousands Thousands ministering unto him, and Ten thousand Times Ten thousand standing before him (f). I have not seen that fair and glorious Company that stand about the Throne, with the Lamb in the midst of them, and are singing the Song of Moses and the Lamb (g); but I take his Word for it, who is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, that the Regions of Glory are good and delectable Lands, and I rest in the Accomplishment of his Promises; and here I deposit my Life, my Soul, my All in his Hands; for the Body also I leave as a Pawn, Pledge, and Trust in my Redeemer's Hand, to take it up again another Day with Advantage; for I know the Faithfulness, and I know the All-sufficiency of the great, wonderful, never-changing IMMANUEL.

LVII. The

(a) Eccles. xii. 7. Philip. i. 23. (b) Psal. xxxi. 5. (c) Acts vii. 59. (d) 2 Cor. i. 12. (e) 2 Cor. xii. 4. (f) Dan. vii. 9, 10. (g) Rev. vii. 9. and xv. 3.

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LVII. *The Valley of Death being passed, the Soul finds itself in eternal Life.*

The Soul now reaches Heaven; and when there, it is not inclosed in a surrounding Glory, without any active Principle from within to correspond to that happy Place, but it hath vital self-moving Principles in it, that elevate and adapt it to its high Enjoyments. If the separate Soul were a dead and senseless Thing, it could not take in any of the heavenly Joys. There is God in all his Glory: But if the Soul had no living Principle in itself, it could find no more Pleasure in the Glory of God, than a Stone can find in the Brightness of the Sun. In Heaven there is Christ and all his Fulness: But if there is no internal vital Principle, there is no Sense of Wants, and so no taking in of the Mediator's Fulness. In Heaven there are *Rivers of Pleasures*: But if there is no active conscious Power in the Soul, there could be no opening of the Heart to receive them. The proper Notion of Life is Self-activity, and Feeling of the same, with Perception of Objects and Enjoyments suitable. And the Difference between the natural and spiritual Life in a Man, lies in this, that in the one there is no Principle of Activity, but a Man's own Soul, whereas in the other the Spirit of Christ is the animating and actuating Principle (a).

Hence the great active and vital Power in all the glorified Saints, making up their happy eternal Life, is the *eternal Spirit of Christ* eternally dwelling in them. What Souls are to Bodies, that is Christ to all the blessed Souls, the very Soul and Life of them. 'Tis as true in Heaven as on Earth, that 'tis not so much the Believer that liveth, *as Christ that liveth in him*, and more fully so. 'Tis as true in Heaven as on Earth, that *without Christ we can do nothing, and that our Life is hid with Christ in God*, and that Christ is *All in All*. As *Christ in us the Hope of Glory*, so 'tis Christ in us that will be the Perfection of Glory. It is not for nought that Christ is himself called *Eternal Life* (b),
and

(a) John iii. 36. (b) 1 John v. 20.

and that he is represented as the *Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God (a)*, Men and Angels too, being as so many Branches receiving Life from him; And it cannot have less than this great Meaning, when he prays that Believers *may* at length, when they behold his and his Father's Glory, *be all one in the Father and the Son, as the Father and the Son are One (b)*. 'Tis IMMANUEL that fills all in Heaven with immortal Vivacity. He is the Light and Life of that higher House, and his sweet and lively Influences, communicate there to the full, raise all the heavenly Inhabitants to the full Power and Strength of Immortality and eternal Life.

And, O what a Flow of Delights and Joys will come into the Glorified's Mind upon such a Perception and Reflection as this, that 'tis the Spirit of God, the Spirit of *Emmanuel*, that is the active Principle of all their Vitality, yea the self-moving Principle of Life in them!

And here we may suppose the blessed Spirit to have such joyful Reviews of this, as these: Doth the Spirit of Christ, as *the Spirit of Glory*, rest upon me? Doth the eternal Spirit of the Son of God dwell in such a Soul as mine hath once been? O wonderful! This is the Soul where once Satan's Seat was, where once the Prince of Darkness had his Throne. This is the Soul where Lusts, innumerable Lusts, where Idols, a Multitude of Idols, where *Ziim* and *Ochim*, where Devils and Dragons, and Satyrs once had their Dwelling. And now, is such a Spirit cleansed, purged, and made ready to be an eternal Habitation for the Spirit of Christ? O amazing Grace! While Sin and Satan had me in Possession, and did lord over me, my Soul then was covered in Darkness, and lay buried in Death, and gloomy Horrors were its Dwelling: But now hath it not only enter'd into the Seat of Light, Life and Joy, but the very Spirit of Light, Life and Joy, hath enter'd into it, to keep Possession of it, and this for ever. O
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(a) Rev. xxii. 2. (b) John xvii. 21.

Eternity itself is not too long for the Contemplation and Adoration of so much Grace!

Another sweet Thought, we may suppose, the glorified Saint to have upon this. Doth the Spirit of *Emmanuel* not only inhabite me, but animate me as another Soul, or another Self in me, then the Principle of this happy Life must be of vast Comprehension and Activity; then the Fountain of it is perennial; then the Head of the vital Streams of the celestial Life can never run dry: There is no Hazard now from the Mutability of a created Will, or the Defectibility of created Grace; since 'tis not our Spirit but a better Spirit within us, that is the Principle of our blessed Immortality and eternal Life. O Grace, eternally immutable! O Love, eternally inexpressible!

Another sweet and delectable Thought of a glorified Spirit, upon this View of its State, may be this. Doth the living and vivifying Spirit of the Son of God unite himself so closely and intimately to me, as that neither Sin, nor Satan, nor the World, nor Death, nor Self, nor any other Thing, can interveen between me and Christ, the very Soul of my Soul: O but this makes a vigorous Immortality, and a vivacious Eternity! 'Tis not any created Power that's my Stock and Strength, to bear me out through Eternity in a joyful vigorous Sprightliness: For if so, the Subject might waste, the active Principle might decay, and its Activity fail; but if it is the permanent vital Energy of Christ's Spirit that is my Fountain, Spring, and Principle of Life, then I am able now, not only to sustain the *exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, but also to correspond to the same in an eternal suitable vigorous Activity. O Raptures, Raptures for evermore! Is the Spirit of my Lord and Saviour not only a living, but a Life-giving Principle in me; yea not only a Life-giving Principle, but my very Life itself, the very eternal Life of my eternal Life: What high Emotions of Love, Joy, Praise, Wonder, and Admiration will this raise in the heavenly Inhabitants! Even such, as were there any Thing beyond
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Raptures and Transports, yet it could not express or represent their great inconceivable and ineffable Joys.

In the *next* Place, Another essential Part of the blessed Immortality and Eternal Life, which the glorified Soul is possessed of, is the *Divine Nature* wrought in them (a), and perfected, and preserved perfect, through a constant Communication with the Spirit of Christ; whereby as Christ lives in that Soul, so also it hath a Life of its own, and native Powers and Principles of its own, to make it eternally active and lively in the Air and Element of Glory. It hath nothing now in all its Frame to make it indolent or drowsy or lazie; nothing in all its Constitution that hath the least Affinity with Death, or any Shape or Image of Death. In that perfect Regeneration 'tis now wholly Spirit, an active Spirit, a sprightly Power, or rather an incessant Activity and Action in all that's great, good and joyful. In Heaven there is a full Sight of the unvail'd Face of God, a full Intuition of the Glory of all his Perfections, a perfect Nearness to all the Mediator's Fulness, and all the Rivers of Pleasures and Delights that flow at his right Hand; and they are active in the Fruition of the same, there is a Spirit, a Divine Principle within them, elevating them to the Perception of such heavenly Divine Objects, and acting in the Enjoyment of them with Vigour, Joy and Transport.

And O what a Source of Joys and Delights will the glorified Soul find upon every Thought of this!

Here is a Soul that was low, creeping and groveling in the Dust, and had more of the passive than active Power in it, that is now wholly Life and Action. O the lively vigorous Joy of this! This is the Soul that was many a Time not only dull through the heavy Organs it was used with, but even once quite dead, thro' Carnality and Worldliness that sunk it in the Flesh and buried it under Clods of Earth; and is that Soul now all Spirit and Life? This is Life indeed, 'tis pure Life without any Death. The Soul that was so weak and feeble, as to be craving every now and then a Cessation

(a) John iv. 14.

on from Action and Business, is it now come to that, as that vigorous eternal Acting in the most sublime Affairs, is now its very Element, Rest, and Delight? O the Strength of Immortality, and the incorruptible and never fading Joy thereof! The Spirit that was either so num in its Powers, or so clogged with external Incumbrances, as that it could do very little but receive Impressions from Things external; is it now free, not only from all Intaglements from without, but also from all Lassitude, Weariness, or Weakness from within, and from every Cause of them: What's to hinder that blessed Spirit now from having as much Life, and as much Joy in its Life as it would?

Further, 'Tis certain that every one acts and moves in that State and Condition of Life his Understanding opens up and points out to him: And the glorified Spirit having his Understanding perfectly enlightened, thereby there is in his Heaven and Happiness, not only an objective but a subjective Glory; not only a Light shining upon him, even *the Light of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ*; but there is the opening of his Eyes, and receiving this Light, and the bending his Mind to the Contemplation and Admiration of the same. And if a Beam of the Light of God's Countenance, even here away, notwithstanding all the dark Interposition of Sin and Sense, doth diffuse such Life and Joy through all the Faculties of our Souls, what will it be to see the Glory of God directly shining on us? O what joyful Activity will this cause in the blessed Spirit above!

'Tis certain also, that the Saints in Heaven attain such a perfect Disposition of their Wills, as that there is not the least Remains or Degree left in them, of any Repugnancy to the Image and Will of God: But there is in them such a Divine Inclination, as makes them eternally to shut themselves into their chief Good, and causes a strong and uninterrupted Out-going of Spirit to all possible Communion with God. And this must be another Spring of eternal joyful Activity in their Souls. It cannot miss this to keep up their Heart dilated, enlarged, and

and vigorously lively for ever; being now in their Element, when acting in a Way of the nearest Intercourse with Jehovah and the Lamb.

'Tis no less certain, that their Love to God and the blessed Jesus is now perfected. There is no more any Ignorance of God, no Aversion to him, nor Coldness of Love; and this must cause an eternal active Adherence to God, and an eternal vigorous Activity in all Matters that concern his Glory, and in all Enjoyments relating to their own Happiness.

'Tis easy now to see (as perhaps a gracious Soul begins already to taste) what a Spring of Joys will run through all the Faculties and Affections of the glorified Spirit upon every Thought, upon every one of these Particulars.

And here we may suppose the glorified Spirit exulting in his own happy Life and Condition by such sweet Reflections upon it. While, and as long as indwelling Corruption remained in me, I sat in Darkness and in the Shadows of Death many a Time; and while so, my Heart was so dull and spiritless, that I could do little for God, and little becoming an immortal Spirit. But now, that it is given me to understand perfectly the Things freely given me of God; O what Excellency do I see in them, even enough to wrap up my Soul in the Admiration of God, and make me eternally active for his Glory! While the Body of Sin and Death did hang about me, a Cloud of carnal Fumes and earthly Mists did intercept my Sight of IMMANUEL'S Country; but now I see it, I see it to be all Life and Joy, to be wholly and purely Life and Joy for evermore. Such was the Infirmary of my Flesh, that I could not bear a full Out-letting of the Glory of God, it so transcends frail Mortality; but now I can look upon it directly, and with such a full Eye and broad Look, as actuates all the Powers of my Soul for ever, in the active and eternal Fruition of God. O this is Life indeed, a happy Life indeed, 'tis eternally so!

Here is a Soul, that while in the Days of my Flesh was sometimes enlarged towards God, and sometimes

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not, sometimes was pressing hard after God, and sometimes not; but now it stands perfectly and indeclinably bent towards God, and the nearest Conformity to him, and Intercourse with him. O this is Joy indeed! My Heart now shall not reproach me, while I live, in any of its Actings or Enjoyments, but it congratulates itself in its own blessed Exercises, and needs not put a Check to its Joy in them. Here is a Soul that was once wandering in the Pursuits of its Heart, from one Vanity to another, because it could find no Rest while at a Distance from God; but lo! now it hath found out its restful Object, found out a Rest in God, and can hug itself in its own happy Choice, and say, *This is my Rest, here will I dwell for ever.* O all Joy! O Joy above all Joy! Here is a Soul that was once distracted and torn hither and thither by innumerable Objects, any of which, or altogether, could neither suit nor fill its Capacity; but lo, now it hath attained the one Thing needful, and the one Thing satisfying, even the Fruition of All-sufficiency itself; and now 'tis made happy as it would, happy according to its Mind, yea happy above all that before now it could conceive or think on.

Again, may the glorified Spirit say, As long as I had to conflict with the contrary Principle of Corruption, my Affection to God was many a Time dull and languishing; but now it makes out to him with immortal Vigour and Strength. It then required great Pains with my Heart to get it wrought up to any Pitch of Divine Love, but now I am as the Seraphim shining with Light and burning with Love to our glorious God and amiable Redeemer. There was then much of the Creature in my Affection; after all the Work upon my Heart to keep it with Christ, it was not so closely unite to him, but that it was often opening itself to temporal Things: But now all the rivalling Objects are gone; I see nothing now in God, or out of God, to seduce my Heart from him; and nothing now can hinder my Love to him, who is only lovely, and altogether lovely. O happy Day, when perfect Affection shall act incessantly on the most perfect Object, and satiate itself with the

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same for ever and ever ! O what overflowing Tides of Joy and Admiration for ever will attend every Thought of such a happy Change !

O happy eternal Life ! where there is an eternal uninterrupted Action of the Soul upon God, Christ, and all the Fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him ; and where there is an eternal vigorous Activity to bear the Soul out in such an eternal Divine Employment and Action : And where there is the eternal Spirit of Christ, sufficient enough to hold it up in an eternal vigorous Activity both in doing and receiving of good. There is no Sin there to separate the Soul from Christ, and his continued vivifying Influences, and therefore nothing to cause fainting or failing of Spirit for ever and ever. No heavy Flesh there to clog the Soul, nor Weakness of animal Spirits to impair its Vigour, being now its absent from the animal Body, and present with the Lord : No worldly Objects there to distract their Minds, but their Affections to Things Divine being united, are strong, and eternally vigorous. Should Grace, because a created Thing, begin to fail, it cannot, because the eternal Spring of its Supply is the all-sufficient, eternal and wonderful IMMANUEL. O what would not the gracious Soul give to attain this here ! It may be he is raised to Life, Vigour, and Activity in the Service of God ; but then, either the Urgency or Importunity of Sin runs away with his Soul again, or the Affairs of the World slacken his Attention to the Things of God, or the dulness of his Body damps the Vivacity of his Spirit. But there is nothing of all this in Heaven : There is nothing there but true, pure, and perfect Life for ever and ever.

LVIII. *The Soul in eternal Life and Glory, sings eternally Hallelujah.*

The Soul having now entred within the Vail, where there is the Land of clear Light, pure Love, and perfect Life and Joy : Where there is an innumerable Company of Angels, the Spirits of just Men made perfect, the General Assembly of the First born, and all the great
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Multitude in Heaven, who say and sing, Hallelujah: This Soul, I say, no sooner is on the other Side of Death, and in Possession of eternal Life, but instantly joins in the heavenly Confort, with all the fair Company in Heaven, saying and singing with lofty Notes, and rapturous Strains; Glory to the Lamb, and him that sits on the Throne, Alleluja: Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord our God. Amen. Alleluja (a).

And, O my Soul, dost thou think, that thou already hearest the *Allelujas* of the glorified? He hath, saith the glorified Saint, pardoned all mine Iniquities, the least of which would have been enough to condemn me eternally. *He hath forgiven my Trespases, blotting out the Hand-writing that was against me (b).* He hath pardoned fully, pardoned freely, and pardoned finally. *O who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Iniquity, Transgression and Sin, and retainest not thine Anger for ever, because thou delightest in Mercy (c).* *Worthy is the Lamb to receive Power, and Honour, and Wisdom, and Dominion and Glory: Amen, Hallelujah (d).*

And he hath called me, saith the triumphant Spirit, with a *holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his Purpose, which was given us in Christ, before the World began (e).* His Spirit has secretly wind-ed himself into my Spirit, and by hidden Passages communicated a vital Savour to my Soul. His heavenly Light hath beam'd into my Soul, letting me see that of the Evil of Sin, and that of the Beauty of Holiness, and that of the Preciousness of Christ, which I never saw before: A Light which did not lightly glance the Brain, but pierced into the very Heart of my Soul. And *whence is this, that thou hast manifested thyself to me, and not to the World (f)?*

And his vivifying Influence hath made a dead Soul live, and live eternally. *O I have been fearfully and wonderfully made, and yet more fearfully and wonderfully renewed (g)! Blessed be the Father of our Lord Jesus*

(a) Rev. xix. 1. (b) Col. ii. 14. (c) Mic. vii. 18. (d) Rev. v. 12. (e) 2 Tim. i. 9. (f) John xiv. 22. (g) Psal. cxxxix. 14.

Jesus Christ, who hath given unto us the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation, and made us know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what's the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance, and what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power to us that believe (a). Amen, Halleluja.

And he hath changed my vile Nature, faith the glorified Saint, and made it a Partaker of the Divine Nature (b). He hath cleansed my Soul from the Filthiness and Pollution of Sin, and made me holy, and meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light (c). He hath drawn the Lineaments of Christ upon my Soul, and transformed me into his Likeness: So that I have been changed from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (d). Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and made us Kings and Priests unto God, to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen (e), Halleluja.

And to whom hath the Lord vouchsafed so great Kindness and Favour? To me, faith one Saint, that before was so grossly ignorant and senseless; that tho' I was in Hell's Road, yea in the Confines of Death and Destruction, yet I knew it not, but was secure and jolly, dancing about the Sides of the Pit, until a new Light did spring into my Mind: A Light which hath shewed me the Paths of Life, and that in God's Presence and Favour there is Fulness of Joy (f): And at his right Hand are Rivers of Pleasures for evermore. God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ (g). O glorious Christ! O glorious Things are spoken of thee, thou Son of the living God, thou Light of the World, thou Lover of Souls! Halleluja.

And to me, faith another Saint, who, before his Grace reached my Soul, went on in a full Career of Sin, and lived as if I could out-face Heaven, out-vie Hell, and out-dare Vengeance: Yet a Day of his Power hath

(a) Eph. i. 17, 18, 19. (b) 2 Pet. i. 4. (c) Col. i. 12.
(d) 2 Cor. iii. 18. (e) Rev. i. 5, 6. (f) Psal. xxi. 11. (g) 2 Cor.
iv. 6.

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hath passed upon my Heart, and turned such a Sot, or such an incarnate Devil, unto a Saint. O free Grace! O rich Grace! O there is nothing too hard for the Almighty! *Has Grace abounded to the chief of Sinners (a)? Has he pardoned mine Iniquities, because they were great (b)? O because he hath forgiven much, I have the more Cause to love much (c), and praise much! And O! I'll greatly praise the Lord (d), and my Soul shall incessantly be joyful in God! Sing ye Heavens, shout ye Saints. Halleluja.*

And his Grace has reached me, says a third Saint, who because I was kept from gross Sins, therefore I was jolly and merry, and did bear up my Soul with the good Hopes of Heavens Happiness: Tho' at the same Time gross Ignorance of the Purity and Spirituality of God's Law, rooted Infidelity as to Gospel-Truths, a secret Disaffection and Malignity of Heart to serious Holiness, predominant Pride, reigning Earthliness and habitual Sensuality did prevail in my Soul. Yet by his powerful and efficacious Grace, he hath made me believe the Things I had not seen, and hope for Things I did not fully know (e). He hath made me sensible of the Purity and Spirituality of God's Law, removed the Estrangement and Enmity of my Heart to God, and caused me part with these Sins, which I counted not only my Pleasure and Ornament, but even my very Life and Subsistence before. He hath caused me to bewail my misplaced Confidence, and enabled me to take Christ for my Prince and Saviour, and God for my Portion, and Heaven for my Home. And hath he done all this for me? O *Arm of the Lord, thou art our Strength (f), and our Song, and art become our Salvation (g). O how excellent is thy Loving-kindness! Men and Angels celebrate and praise the wonderful Works of our God. Halleluja.*

And what am I brought unto, says the triumphant Soul, by all these Operations of Grace in Time? And where

(a) Rom. v. 20. (b) Psal. xxv. 11. (c) Luke vii. 47.
(d) Psal. cix. 30. (e) Heb. xi. 1. (f) Isa. li. 9. (g) Isa. xli. 2.

where do I now find myself? Why, I find myself in Glory, in the Chamber of God's Presence, and in the very Place where his Honour and Holiness dwells; in the proper Place and Regions of all true Joy? Where am I now come? I am come to Mount Zion the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and unto an innumerable Company of Angels, to the General Assembly of the First-born, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament (a). And O 'tis good to be here! I prayed to be here, I did run to be here, and fought to be here; I longed, groaned, sighed, breathed, panted and laboured to be here, and lo! I am here at length, says the glorified Spirit! where no Guilt shall ever again overcast my Soul, and no Pollution shall henceforth estrange me from God, or unfit me for his Service: And where no Hatred of Men or Devils shall any more reach me: And where Death hath lost its Sting, and Hell is cast into the Lake that burneth for ever and ever: And where everlasting Joy shall be upon my Head, and Sorrow and Sighing shall flee away (b). O all Joy and Shouting! O Praise, Praise be to the Lord. *Hallelujah.*

O my Soul, saith the glorified Saint, thou art now as happy as thou canst wish, as happy as Happiness itself can make thee. If the All-sufficiency of God and Fulness of Christ immediately communicated, can make thee happy, thou art now happy. If an University of all Perfections, and immediate Emanations from infinite Goodness can make thee happy, thou art now happy, and shall be for ever happy. If Goodness itself, Grace in an abundant, transcendent, supereminent Manner; if all that is in God, and all that is in Christ, and all that is in Heaven can make thee happy, thou art now happy, and shall be eternally happy. O inutterable Joy! O sweet and loud-sounding Praise! O Heaven of Heavens ring with the Acclamations of Grace, Grace, Grace! And let my Soul say, and say again eternally; *Alleluja.*
And

(a) Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. (b) Isa. xxxv. 10.

And how, saith the glorified Saint, and by what Methods of his deep and wise Providence, did the Lord fit and train me up for this Glory?

Sometimes he brake in upon my House and Family, and bereaved me of some dear Relation: And thus I was laid at his own Door for Comfort; and lo! I have found him alone sufficient, and Ten thousand Times *better than ten Husbands*, ten Children, or Ten thousand Times ten of all Relations. *Hallelujah.*

And sometimes he cut me short in earthly Enjoyments, that I might live on his Promises, and receive my Comforts immediately from himself. And O! there is no Comfort so pure, so refined, so intimately satisfying, as these that are fetcht immediately from God, and from Christ! And Thanks be to God for any Method he ever took, how severe soever it may appear to the Flesh, to cause me rest only on himself, as my All, and my exceeding great Joy. *Amen, Hallelujah.*

And sometimes he brake in upon my Health. He laid his Hands upon me, and *chastened me with sore Pain upon my Bed*, that I might be crucified unto the World, and mortify the Flesh, and might taste and be ravished with the Delights of Divine Love, and be revived and refreshed with heavenly Pleasures. O but this was well done, and kindly done to a poor Soul, *says the triumphant Saint*, that when I was lying among the Pots, I might become as a Dove with Wings of Silver, and Feathers of Gold: And in Salmon become white as Snow (a)! I not only admire thy Wisdom, but also adore thy Goodness, in all the Methods thou hast taken to save us! O this is the Lord, and we have waited on him; this is our God and he hath saved us. We will eternally be glad and rejoice in him. *Hallelujah.*

But who can utter the mighty Acts of the Lord? Boundless Eternity, be thou filled with the Praises of the Lamb, and him that sits on the Throne. O sing on, ye Inhabitants of Glory; sing on, ye Spirits of just Men made perfect, chant forth the Praises of our God

(a) Psa. lxxviii. 12, 13.

God and the glorious Redeemer. Let there be high-sounding *Allelujas*. We are but Bunglers in this heavenly Exercise: We make but a Jar in the heavenly Musick. When we would praise and celebrate, we do but lessen and disparage the glorious Excellencies of God. What do we but *darken Counsel by Words without Understanding*? Ah! how poorly do we talk of the great Things of God, and the bright Things of Glory! O may we obtain the same Grace with you, and join with you, and make one Consort with you, in the triumphant Expressions of Love, Joy, Adoration and Praise through endless Eternity! *Bless the Lord, ye his Angels, that excell in Strength: Bless the Lord, all ye glorious Hosts of his: Bless the Lord, ye Ministers that do his Pleasure: Bless the Lord, all his Works in all Places of his Dominion: Bless the Lord, O my Soul (a)!*

ALLELUJA, ALLELUJA.

(a) Psal. ciii. 20, 21, 22.



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